# ROCK CANDY

FOR THOSE WHO WERE RAISED ON ROCK

February-March 2020

**MEGADETH**
DAVE ELLEFSON SPEAKS

**THE BLACK CROWES**
'SHAKE YOUR MONEY MAKER' REVISITED

**SAGA**
POMP IT UP!

**METALLICA**
THE MAKING OF 'RIDE...' AND 'MASTER...'

**THE ANGELS**
OZ ROCK'S BEST-KEPT SECRET

**FRANK MARINO**
"STOP WITH THE HENDRIX ALREADY!"

**IRON MAIDEN**
BLAZE BAYLEY'S 'INSIDE TRACK'

# MICHAEL SCHENKER

## The MSG Years – Exclusive Interview

## SLASH – THE LOST INTERVIEW

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# ROCK CANDY

# WELCOME

**IF PUSH CAME TO** shove I think I'd nominate Michael Schenker as my favourite ever heavy rock guitarist. There are three reasons for this. First, when it comes to riffs Michael constructs some of the most phenomenal chord progressions imaginable. Second, his lead playing is off the hook and never relies on speed to mask a lack of melodic imagination. Third, Michael always looked so damn cool. His long blond hair and chiselled features left us in no doubt that this was a supreme guitar god for our times. Nonetheless, Michael's journey has been fraught with setbacks. It's been a rocky road, but Howard Johnson's interview in this issue of *Rock Candy Mag* reveals a confident and creative Michael we feared might have been lost forever. He appears to have conquered his demons and is forging a new path embracing all aspects of his career, including the appointment of three of his old star vocalists under the Michael Schenker Fest banner. He's also touring with renewed energy and purpose. I'll always give Michael the benefit of the doubt, so I'm looking forward to catching one of those shows in the not-too-distant future.

Howard's feature also includes some surprising revelations, such as the news that David Coverdale at one point attempted to corral Michael and other members of his band into Whitesnake after the dissolution of the original Marsden/Moody line-up. Now that would have been something to salivate over, but alas it wasn't to be.

We've also included a large feature on one of my favourite Australian bands of the '70s. Angel City (or The Angels, as they were called in Oz) made a name for themselves as one of a handful of groups that specialised in the sort of tough riff-rock popularised by AC/DC and Rose Tattoo. The ace in The Angels' pack was undoubtedly frontman Doc Neeson, a genius of sorts whose lyrics transcended the normal hard rock clichés, inviting us into a bizarre world of intrigue and mystery. Fortunately, back in the day I witnessed the band play a blistering live show at London's legendary Marquee club. And while The Angels never made it as a top drawer act outside of Australia, their musical legacy is undeniable. Listen to the 'Face To Face' and 'No Exit' albums to acquaint yourself with this amazingly talented band.

It's our pleasure to bring you the latest edition of *Rock Candy Mag* with all this and more. I hope you get as much out of reading it as we did out of putting it together.

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**WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE ROCK SONG WITH BRACKETS IN THE TITLE?**


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**Dave Reynolds**
'(Call My Name) Rock Magic' – Speedway Blvd.
**Paul Suter**
'Target (My Eyes Are Aimed At You)' – Dalbello


Photo: Getty Images/Pete Cronin/Redferns

# ROCK CANDY MAG ISSUE 18 CONTENTS

## 56 MICHAEL SCHENKER

## UPFRONT

Exclusive interview

Albums available on *Rock Candy* Records

Want to comment on anything in *Rock Candy Mag*? Email us: **Editorial@rockcandymag.com**


**6 ROCK CANDY VIDEO PLAYLISTS**
Rock songs with brackets in the title, bands named after cities, numbers about numbers and rockers doing Dylan. All of this crazy stuff can be seen on YouTube with the help of our writers' recommendations...

**8 FROZEN IN TIME – STARZ**
Why did a band that sounded this good fail to become huge? Why did a band that looked this good fail to be mega? The answer is in the Starz...

**10 STEP BACK IN TIME – SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1983**
The higher the hair the closer to God. That's what they said in the '80s. So why not indulge yourself by heading back there to investigate stories about Kiss, Lizzy, Diamond Head and Rory Gallagher – and how those events played out...

**18 PERSON OF INTEREST – MARTIN HOOKER**
He loved his metal and proved it by starting Music For Nations, the most influential independent rock label the UK has ever known. Malcolm Dome salutes Martin Hooker, who passed away recently...

**20 CLASSIC ALBUM SLEEVE – TRIUMPH'S 'JUST A GAME'**
Artist Rene Zamic recalls how Triumph guitarist Rik Emmett turned up at his house wearing extravagantly big boots to explain his requirements for the Toronto band's third album cover.

**22 YOU COULDN'T MAKE IT UP – BRIAN ROBERTSON RUINS A U.S. TOUR FOR THIN LIZZY AFTER A BAR BRAWL**
We're back in 1976 as the Thin Lizzy guitarist decides that a night on the town is the perfect thing to do before he flies to the States for an important US tour. He couldn't have been more wrong!

**24 CLOSE ENCOUNTERS – DEREK OLIVER RUNS AWAY FROM DIRTY LOOKS**
Our esteemed *Rock Candy Mag* boss recalls being chased around his desk by a rather irate frontman following a case of mistaken identity.

**25 MY FIRST GIG – ROB CAVESTANY OF DEATH ANGEL**
The thrash guitarist remembers his obsession with Kiss when he first went to see them back in '79.

**26 CASTLE DONINGTON MONSTERS OF ROCK BOOK**
The most legendary – and the muddiest – rock festival of them all remembered via some stunning images from a cool new coffee table book.

## FEATURES


**28 DARK DAYS – CHEAP TRICK**
Guitarist Rick Nielsen remembers his band's four-album '80s slump, and how they got out of it.

**34 EYEWITNESS – PRODUCER FLEMMING RASMUSSEN ON THE MAKING OF METALLICA'S 'RIDE THE LIGHTNING' AND 'MASTER OF PUPPETS'**
The man who crafted the sounds on these two iconic thrash albums gives us the lowdown on what it was like to be at the heart of the action.

**40 SAGA**
Pomp over Puerto Rico! Paul Suter chews the fat with Saga, the Canadian band that rewrote the rules of rock.

**48 OVERLOOKED – THE ANGELS**
*Rock Candy Mag* offers an in-depth look at Australia's best-kept rock secret.

**54 THE ROCK CANDY Q&A – GRAND SLAM'S LAURENCE ARCHER**
The guitarist who played with Phil Lynott just before the legend's untimely death discusses the ups and downs of working with an icon.

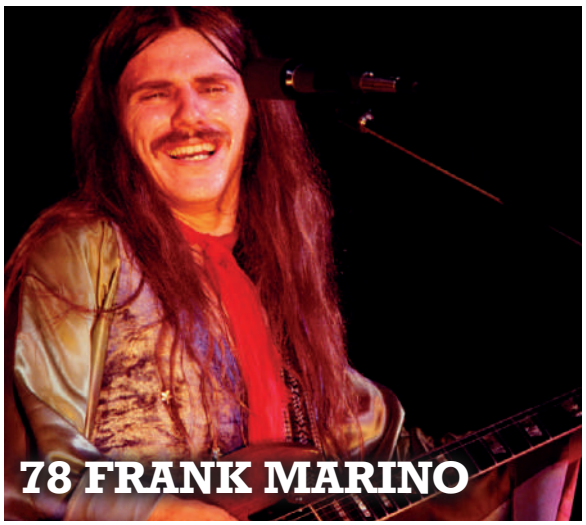
**56 MICHAEL SCHENKER**
Settle in for a fascinating in-depth interview with the German rock guitarist who really did set the standard in the '70s and '80s

**64 GARY BARDEN**
The first Michael Schenker Group vocalist discusses his life and work.

**66 GRAHAM BONNET**
The voice of MSG's classic 'Assault Attack' album on working with Schenker and the unfortunate incident that led to his dismissal.

**68 ROBIN McAULEY**
The third of our triumvirate of MSG singers on why working with Michael is such a joy.

**70 SLASH – THE LOST INTERVIEW**
Malcolm Dome finally gets his fascinating 1991 interview with the guitar great into print!





**74 RAPID FIRE RECALL – DAVE ELLEFSON OF MEGADETH**
The born-again Christian bassist on Dave Mustaine, why thrash was considered a joke, and playing with KK Downing...

**78 UNCOVERED – FRANK MARINO**
Howard Johnson hooks up with the Canadian guitarist for a fascinating journey inside his mind.

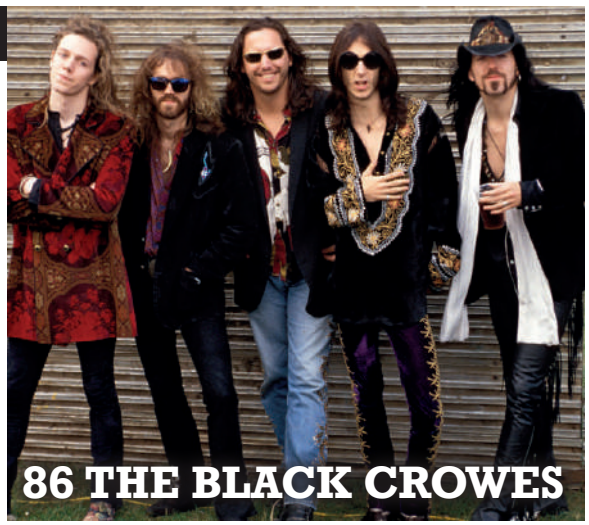

## PRODUCT


**86 REAPPRAISED – 'SHAKE YOUR MONEY MAKER' BY THE BLACK CROWES**
They brought rock'n'roll back to its roots with their 1990 debut. But does it still make us want to strut our funky stuff?

**88 STRIKTLY FOR KONNOISSEURS – NEW ENGLAND AND MANFRED MANN**
Albums that may have slipped down the back of the metaphorical sofa. This issue we offer up New England's pomp pop debut and a Manfred Mann prog masterpiece from 1973.

**90 ROCK CANDY REISSUES – FASTWAY AND IF ONLY**
Yet more classics from the rock vault, retuned and revitalised by the greatest reissue label on the planet.

**92 REVIEWS**
Bad Company's 1979 album 'Desolation Angels' gets a facelift, Black Crowes drummer Steve Gorman pens a warts 'n' all exposé, New England receive the box set treatment, and we're offered a DVD on how rock turned into metal...



**94 THE INSIDE TRACK – BLAZE BAYLEY ON IRON MAIDEN**
He was such a fan that he ended up joining the band! Vocalist Blaze Bayley gives you his unique insight into the music of the UK metal legends.

**98 CROSSWORD**
Will you beat it? Or will it beat you?

**99 SUBSCRIBE TO *ROCK CANDY MAGAZINE***
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Michael Schenker cover photo: IconicPix/George Chin. Contents page photos: Getty Images/Paul Natkin; Getty Images/Richard McCaffrey/Michael Ochs Archives; Getty Images/Mick Hutson/Redferns

# ROCK CANDY VIDEO PLAYLISTS

**THERE'S GREAT ROCK MUSIC ALL OVER YOUTUBE, THE PROBLEM IS FINDING IT. SO LET US TAKE THE PAIN OUT OF SEARCHING WITH OUR EASY-TO-ACCESS VIDEO PLAYLISTS. SIMPLY TYPE THE WORDS IN BRACKETS INTO YOUR YOUTUBE SEARCH BOX... AND ROCK!**

## FIVE SONGS FROM 'CITY' BANDS

**Chosen by Dave Reynolds**

**New York Dolls – 'Jet Boy' (NEW YORK DOLLS - Jet Boy (1973 UK TV OGWT Performance) ~ HIGH QUALITY HQ ~)**
This New York Dolls appearance on the BBC's *Old Grey Whistle Test* back in 1973 is possibly better known for smirking host Bob Harris's 'mock rock' comment following this performance of strutting, stomping anthem 'Jet Boy'. Yet the clip shows the trailblazing glam rock quintet at the peak of their powers during their all-too-brief career. This is, quite frankly, a visual blueprint for all of Kiss, Sex Pistols, Mötley Crüe and Hanoi Rocks. Fantastic stuff!

**Tokyo – 'Tokyo' (Tokyo - Tokyo (Rockpop))**
Tokyo were the German equivalent of Toto, formed by a group of Frankfurt-based session musicians who wanted to rock out in their spare time. The title track from their eponymous debut album introduced Tokyo to the wider German public, thanks to this performance on prime time TV show *Rockpop* back in 1981. The audience – oddly sitting with their backs to the band – seem unimpressed, but this appearance still led to big sales.

**London – 'Ride You Through The Night' (LONDON (the band) RIDE YOU THROUGH THE NIGHT)**
By the time this promo video appeared in 1990 perennial Sunset Strippers London had effectively become a vehicle for vocalist Nadir D'Priest, with a supporting cast that also included ex-Giuffria drummer Alan Krigger. This clip ticks all the boxes for the era. Remote location, horses, chicks, and motorcycles are all present and correct. And when he's singing about riding, we all know Nadir's not talking about horses or motorcycles...

**Toronto – 'Your Daddy Don't Know' (Toronto - Your Daddy Don't Know (1982, CAN # 5, US # 77) (Enhanced))**
Toronto featured a female vocalist and guitarist pairing in the form of Holly Woods and Sheron Alton, and 'Your Daddy Don't Know' is just one of a number of superb songs on the band's third album, 1982's 'Get It On Credit'. This video might not offer anything innovative, but there's a real vibrancy to the band's delivery that reveals Woods as a charismatic and powerful frontwoman.

**Boston – 'Foreplay/Long Time' (Boston - Foreplay/longtime - 6/17/1979 - Giants Stadium (Official))**
Surely the greatest band named after a city, this live footage from the colossal Giants stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey back in June 1979 really makes you wish you'd been there. Despite the grainy footage, it's easy to see just how good a live band Boston were. The axis of guitarist Tom Scholz and vocalist Brad Delp are clearly the group's focus, but you also can't help but gawp in wonder at drummer Sib Hashian's impressive afro!

## FIVE NUMBERS FEATURING... ER... NUMBERS

**Chosen by John Nicholson**

**City Boy – '5-7-0-5" (City Boy 5-7-0-5 (HQ Audio))**
This clip from classic UK TV show *Top Of The Pops* sees the City Boy boys miming to their superb and surprise hit single. Singer Lol Mason really throws himself into it and – almost inevitably – there's a woman with a massive perm holding a phone and looking wistful. Clearly there's no reply. Fair play to the keyboard player for wearing dungarees here. Classy.

**Metallica – 'One' (One - Metallica & San Francisco Symphonic Orchestra)**
The whole 1999 gig with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra was epic, and this video captures the vibe particularly well. There's something special about seeing the Metalliboys in front of 'serious' musicians, especially when Lars is beating the drums like he's trying to slaughter a pig. In a high-speed race to the finish of this song the impressive strobes and James's vocal barking make you feel the end of days really has arrived. But what a way to go...

**Van Halen - '5150' (Van Halen – 5150 ibeapunk)**
Over seven minutes of feelgood stuff from the newly-formed Van Hagar filmed at a megashow in New Haven, Connecticut back in 1986. Sammy treats the whole performance like it's a gym class workout, leaping and high-kicking and trying to out-Dave Dave. Eddie's playing has never been better as he rips through this classic riff, pin sharp and on point, goofing and doing that running-on-the-spot thing as Sammy kicks him up the backside. Huge fun, brilliant music. No phones. Better life.

**The Who – '5:15' (The Who - 5.15 - Top Of The Pops 1973)**
This is a notorious live *Top Of The Pops* performance that got The Who into hot water with UK broadcaster the BBC for being way too rock'n'roll. From the get-go you can tell something is brewing. Drummer Keith Moon gurns like he's got a screw loose and Roger Daltrey does his trademark mic swing as Pete Townshend prowls the stage. The guitarist then moves into full destroy mode, laying waste to Moon's drums before trashing his own axe and flashing the Vs to no one in particular. A great spectacle.

**Winger – 'Seventeen' (BETTER QUALITY!) Winger performing "Seventeen" - New Year's Eve '88-89)**
This is a fine late-'80s 'live for TV' performance from Kip and the boys, and guitarist Reb Beach's fretboard tapping alone is worth the price of admission. I particularly love the superb frugging by the women in the audience, all looking incredible in big 'n' bouncy hair. Don't miss the lady in red, who appears to be rowing an invisible boat to accompany Reb's awesome solo.

## FIVE ROCK SONGS WITH BRACKETS IN THE TITLE
### Chosen by Howard Johnson

**Cinderella – 'Don't Know What You Got (Till It's Gone)' (Cinderella – 'Don't Know What You Got (Till It's Gone) [Official Video]')**
Grand piano plonked in the middle of a vast, impressive landscape? Check. Obligatory long leather coats? Check. Heartfelt delivery so everyone knows how hard you've taken the split with your chick? Check. Wasn't '80s hair metal fun when it was done right? This song has stood the test of time rather well, actually. And when musicologists look back to understand what the '80s in America was all about, surely they'll find this in the Smithsonian.

**Blue Öyster Cult – '(Don't Fear) The Reaper' (Blue Oyster Cult – Don't Fear The Reaper (Live 1977))**
Information is scant on this one, but what we do know is that we get BÖC giving us a live version of their evergreen classic somewhere in 1977. Wherever it was, though, the punters were getting a rare treat – a band at the height of its powers performing one of their finest numbers with added lasers! Donald 'Buck Dharma' Roeser takes centre stage and goes for an admirable guitar wig-out. But look out for Eric Bloom's finger action as he exhorts us all not to fear. Marvellous!

**Jimi Hendrix – 'Voodoo Chile (Slight Return)' (Jimi Hendrix – Voodoo Child Cor Lemmers)**
Jimi starts off by saying the Experience were planning to do 'All Along The Watchtower', but that he forgot the words. So they opt for eight minutes of 'Voodoo Chile (Slight Return)' instead. And boy do they blow the roof off in this black and white footage shot in front of a live audience that you don't get to see for some reason. The man's playing is otherworldly as you might expect, but make sure you take the time to appreciate bassist Noel Redding and drummer's Mitch Mitchell's contributions to this stone cold classic here.

**Journey – 'Separate Ways (Worlds Apart)' (Journey - Separate Ways (World Apart) (Official Music Video))**
Journey embrace the '80s wholeheartedly here. Gone is much of the hair – especially Neal Schon's magnificent Afro, sadly – the flares and the satin tour jackets. In have come tight cut-off tees, women wandering around with massive shoulder pads and the dreaded headless bass. The song is fantastic, the video is ridiculous, especially when the band start playing imaginary instruments. It's hard to imagine that this was one of America's biggest commercial successes of the time looking at this. But it's certainly worth a watch for a giggle...

**Aerosmith – 'Remember (Walking In The Sand)' (AEROSMITH - Remember (Walking in the sand) – Live Largo 1980)**
Filmed during Aerosmith's so-called 'lost years' when there was no Joe Perry, this live version of a cover of The Shangri-Las' 1964 hit features Perry replacement Jimmy Crespo playing a funny shaped guitar. But guess what? Jimmy simply smokes here as the band rip it up in super-sleazy style. His solo could strip paint from the walls as he accompanies Steven Tyler howling at the moon in spine-tingling fashion. Crespo only made one album with the 'Smith, 1982's 'Rock In A Hard Place'. This makes you wonder what else might have been...

## FIVE ROCK BANDS INTERPRETING BOB DYLAN SONGS
### Chosen by Ross Sampson

**Guns N' Roses – 'Knockin' On Heaven's Door' (Knockin' On Heavens Door - Guns N' Roses (Bob Dylan cover))**
This is an extraordinary, almost-13 minute long version of the Dylan classic filmed in Tokyo at the height of Guns mania when they were the greatest live act in the world bar none. Enjoy Slash playing a double neck Gibson, bare chested, with signature ciggie in mouth. Then get a kick out of Axl wearing a cowboy hat and what looks worryingly like his underwear. Guitarist Gilby Clarke gets his five minutes of fame, Matt Sorum's hair looks ridiculous, the obligatory mic stand gets tossed and everybody goes home happy...

**Ramones – 'My Back Pages' (RAMONES My Back Pages SUBTILADO)**
Can you think of a more unlikely band to cover this delicate 1964 Dylan song than The Ramones? It might take a minute or two to recognise the tune at all here, given that the band are attacking it at hyper-speed on this early-'90s MTV broadcast complete with Spanish subtitles. And by the time you've worked out what's going on, the song is over. The grainy feel and straight-ahead approach works surprisingly well and it's a bit of rarity because there's no Joey on vocals, just bassist CJ doing the honours.

**Jimi Hendrix – 'All Along The Watchtower' (Jimi Hendrix - All Along the Watchtower - Live Atlanta 7-4-70 - VOCAL/GUITAR only)**
Probably the most famous cover of any Dylan song, here performed in Atlanta in 1970. Jimi's version of 'All Along The Watchtower' was popular with the public, the critics and even with Dylan himself. "It overwhelmed me, really," he said. There's a little false start here thanks to a tuning issue, but Hendrix soon gets to grips with things and goes on to deliver a version of the tune that is full of great soloing and deep, deep soul. Time shall not wither him...

**Ministry – 'Lay Lady Lay' (Ministry - Lay Lady Lay (Official Music Video))**
Taken from Ministry's 1996 album 'Filth Pig', this is a great industrial metal version of 'Lay Lady Lay' that turns the original gentle lovelorn Dylan song into something altogether more dark and deviant. After initial footage of maggots, ladybirds and fish, the band suddenly appear, grinding along to the track accompanied by a series of wildly colourful, psychedelic images. Wonder what Bobby D made of all this. Given his contrary nature he probably loved it...

**Spirit – 'Like A Rolling Stone' (Spirit "Like A Rolling Stone" Live)**
Part of a *RockPalast* live concert filmed for German broadcaster WDR back in 1978, this lengthy version of Dylan's 1965 classic showcases Randy California's fluid, freewheeling guitar playing, as well as his inimitable way with an open shirt and a headband! Ed Cassidy, meanwhile, does his best to uphold the good name of bald drummers in rock. Check out the footage of Ed's drumstick supply four minutes and 37 seconds into this visual treat. Just how many did he think he was going to need for the one gig?!

# FROZEN IN TIME

## DATELINE: 1978

Starz in their eyez. L-R: Michael Lee Smith (vocals), Joe X. Dube (drums), Brendan Harkin (guitar), Pieter Sweval (bass), Richie Ranno (guitar)

They had Kiss's management behind them, a sackful of fab pop rock songs and they looked super-cool. It's a mystery why Starz never made the grade in the '70s...

**STARZ HAD EVERYTHING GOING** for them to be a major name in the '70s heavy rock scene, but for some reason it never quite happened for the New Jersey band. So while management stablemates Kiss became platform-booted, stadium-straddling monsters, Starz ended up a connoisseurs' choice. And that's a shame, because the four studio albums the band released in the '70s are genuine rock classics, each one sprinkled with a liberal dose of pop sensibility.

**THE ROOTS** of Starz date back to the early '70s and a pop rock band, Looking Glass, that scored a number one US hit in 1972 with 'Brandy (You're A Fine Girl)', a song that Kiss frontman Paul Stanley later admitted was a big influence on his band's 'Hard Luck Woman'. At one time or another Looking Glass featured bassist Pieter Sweval, drummer Jeff Grob (soon to be known as Joe X. Dube), vocalist Michael Lee Smith (brother of pop singer and actor Rex Smith) and guitarist Brendan Harkin, all of whom would go on to play in Starz. Looking Glass changed their name to Fallen Angels and added guitarist Richie Ranno in September of 1975. Another name change to Starz followed, and Kiss manager Bill Aucoin soon picked up the band. Aucoin had previously been roommates with songwriter Sean Delaney, who was also pals with Sweval.

**AUCOIN BAGGED** Starz a major label deal with Capitol and Aerosmith producer Jack Douglas was seconded to produce a debut album, 'Starz', that same year. 1977's sophomore effort 'Violation', again produced by Douglas, featured 'Cherry Baby', which made it to number 33 on the US singles charts. It looked like Starz's combination of rock riffs and pop melodies – delivered with gusto by Smith, one of rock's most underrated vocalists – was set fair to light up radio station switchboards with phone requests for years to come. But that didn't happen. The band self-produced on third album, 1978's 'Attention Shoppers!', and forgot to plug in their overdrive pedals. While the songs were still strong, they were much more poppy and Starz seemed to lose momentum, presumably falling between two stools.

Sweval and Harkin left the band and were replaced by guitarist Bobby Messano and bassist Orville Davis for 'Coliseum Rock', produced by Jack Richardson and also released in 1978. The album sounded tougher than its predecessor, but the rock public had moved on and Starz split in 1979.

**THERE HAVE** been various incarnations of the band since their '70s heyday, and in 1992 there was even an album, 'Requiem', featuring some new material. But all the magic is in those four '70s album, which feature plenty of examples of brilliant melodic rock that feel utterly authentic.

Sadly bassist Pieter Sweval died of AIDS in 1990, but Starz are still active today and toured the States with another titanic pop rock band, Angel, in 2019. With such rock legends as Jon Bon Jovi, Nikki Sixx and Tom Keifer citing Starz as a major influence, surely you don't need any more incentive to check out the group, especially when they look as cool as they do in this superb photo by top rock snapper Fin Costello...

**HOWARD JOHNSON**

Photo: Getty Images/Fin Costello/Redferns

# STEP BACK IN TIME

# SEPTEMBER–OCTOBER 1983

*ROCK CANDY'S DAVE LING* LEAFS THROUGH THE BACK PAGES OF THE UK ROCK PRESS TO BRING THE BIG NEWS ITEMS OF THE DAY BACK TO LIFE AND ANALYSE HOW THOSE STORIES REALLY PLAYED OUT…

Kiss *without* the make-up? The band photographed in London, August 1983: L-R: Gene Simmons (bass and vocals), Paul Stanley (guitar and vocals), Vinnie Vincent (guitar), Eric Carr (drums)

## KISS UNMASK AS THEY 'LICK IT UP'

**DATELINE: 20 OCTOBER–2 NOVEMBER 1983**

**MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!***

**THERE HAD BEEN RUMOURS** of 'The Great Unveiling' for a while already. But in the autumn of 1983 it finally happened when Kiss released their 11th studio album, 'Lick It Up', featuring a cover with all four band members' faces exposed for the first time. This was considered a *very big deal*. Since the New York group's inception a decade earlier, the band members had taken great pains to ensure their faces were never seen without make-up. There was the odd fuzzy paparazzi snap, but the media understood the importance of Kiss maintaining a sense of mystique and for the most part played along with the ruse.

In celebration of this new uncovered era, however, Phonogram Records flew *Kerrang!* assistant editor and über-Kiss fan Dante Bonutto to the band's plush New York HQ, a place high above Madison Avenue where the air con was so efficient it practically pumped out ice cubes. Though Vinnie Vincent, the guitarist who'd debuted to such great effect on the previous year's 'Creatures Of The Night' album, was absent due to "domestic reasons", three-quarters of Kiss greeted Bonutto for a playback and interview.

The journo was blown away by side one of 'Lick It Up'. So, too, was the speaker system, prompting relocation to another office. "Sounds just like John Denver, doesn't it?" deadpanned Kiss bassist and vocalist Gene Simmons.

Bonutto got to listen to 'Lick It Up' as Simmons, vocalist/guitarist Paul Stanley and drummer Eric Carr looked on, banging their heads, making in-jokes and indulging in bouts of impromptu mime in the background. As the track 'Fits Like A Glove' was cued up Simmons warned Bonutto to prepare for "perhaps the greatest song of all time." Such a modest guy.

**STANLEY LATER** revealed that Kiss had "seriously considered" removing the pan-stick for 'Creatures…', only to decide to wait a while longer.

"We went ahead because people stopped telling us to," Simmons explained. "From the very first gig everyone, including the record company, told us it was

Photos: Getty Images/Michael Putland; Julia Goode

ridiculous and that we should stop. This year, though, they kept quiet. So we figured it was a good time."

Stanley acknowledged that while the make-up was an attraction for most, for a certain type of music fans it also served as a "hindrance", before Simmons butted in. "Every single year we see other bands taking a piece of us – either studs or heels or leather – and we're proud of it," he said. "Now all of that is becoming in vogue, we want to do something different. We want to be still out there at the front, though. We'll still look like Kiss. If we walk down the street you'll still know it's us."

**WHEN BONUTTO** raised the fact that some fans had felt let down by the big decision, Simmons responded: "This is a marriage, but we're not slaves to our fans and they're not slaves to us. We respect their opinions, but we must act on our own judgment."

"The point is, Kiss has always made its own rules," pointed out Carr. "It made its rules from the very beginning with the make-up, platform heels and stage show, and now it's making more of them."

"But we're still committed to high energy rock'n'roll and 'big' remains a key word," Simmons stressed. "The shows, by and large, will stay the same." Gene was, however, uncertain about the future of his on-stage fire-breathing antics. "I'd like to continue, but there's still an element of finding out exactly who we are," he admitted with a grin. "Special performances of my blood-spitting will be given in my hotel room every night after the show and the fire-breathing I'd like to do comes from the other end – from my ass!"

LICK AND A PROMISE

An 'unmasked' KISS assure DANTE BONUTTO that "we're still the same band."

"SO YOU'RE back in the costumes..."

Gene Simmons stretches out a hand. His ability to unwind either, more lurid parts of his anatomy – both on and off stage – has secured him a slot in music biblical, but on this occasion (thank God) a purely manual greeting is deemed most appropriate.

... put up a chair.

Outside, the streets and concourses are glowing white hot, melting away the scales of







# *ROCK CANDY* SAYS...

**THOUGH THE MEMBERS OF** Kiss appeared casual about it at the time, in reality the removal of their make-up was part of a concerted attempt to halt a marked commercial slide. At the turn of the '80s, with co-founding guitarist Ace Frehley still in the band, Kiss had tried to row back on the pop-fuelled sound of 1979's 'Dynasty' and 1980's 'Unmasked' albums with what was – at least by their standards – a high-brow concept album, 'Music From "The Elder"'. This Bob Ezrin-produced record from 1981 remains the subject of heated debate among Kiss fans. Is it a masterpiece or is it dog turd? For what it's worth I feel it's a masterpiece, though US sales of around 375,000 were considered utterly dismal. Having ejected Frehley during the recording of 'Creatures...' – this despite his face appearing later on the album sleeve and him doing a record signing session with the band at London's Virgin Megastore – Kiss went back to heavy metal basics on that album and earned a gold record in the States for 500,000 units shifted. But the band felt they needed something more drastic to secure a long-term future. Going 'naked' in public represented a massive gamble – but the gamble paid off handsomely. 'Lick It Up' wasn't as heavy as 'Creatures...' but it was sonically more intricate, a terrific album that became Kiss's first million seller since 'Dynasty'.

**VINNIE VINCENT'S** role in Kiss's evolution at this point is fascinating. The guitarist had made an unacknowledged contribution to 'Creatures...' and was certainly viewed as a full-time member, though his refusal to sign an official contract with the band created some tensions. Nevertheless, as a co-writer of 8 of the 10 tracks on 'Lick It Up' Vincent's future within Kiss appeared comfortable. Though the source was unrevealed, Bonutto's *Kerrang!* article even hinted that the guitarist, who apparently sang in the vein of Marc Storace from Krokus, might supply a lead vocal or two on the next record.

Things didn't turn out that way, though. Once they were out performing live on the road, relations within the group soured. Vinnie's guitar solos became longer and longer, much to the fury of the rest of the band, and in early 1984 Paul Stanley reportedly almost clobbered Vincent during a dressing room showdown after a gig at the LA Forum.

Within months Vinnie Vincent was fired, but went on to form Vinnie Vincent Invasion with frontman Robert Fleischman and bass player Dana Strum. After two studio albums, 1986's 'Vinnie Vincent Invasion' and 1988's 'All Systems Go' (featuring Mark Slaughter on vocals), the band splintered. Vincent returned to work with Kiss as a songwriter on 1992's 'Revenge' album, but his contribution to 'Lick It Up' remains his greatest contribution to the Kiss legacy.

"Vinnie, will you stop playing that damn solo?!"

# STEP BACK IN TIME

## PHIL LYNOTT EXPLAINS LIZZY SPLIT

**DATELINE: 25 AUGUST–7 SEPTEMBER 1983**

**MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!***

**THIN LIZZY HAS BECOME** such a byword for great classic rock that it now seems impossible to understand exactly why they split up in 1983. At that time they'd just added hot shot new guitarist John Sykes to the fold, had released a fantastic album, 'Thunder And Lightning', that had been really well received, and suddenly looked rejuvenated and revitalised following the departure of Snowy White. White was a subtle, bluesy player, but many fans felt he wasn't a good fit for the Irish rockers.

Rumours swirled around that the announcement of the Lizzy break-up was some kind of a press scam designed to drum up interest, but that had somehow spiralled out of control. Yet in a cover story with *Kerrang!* writer Neil Jeffries to publicise a swansong UK appearance at the Reading Festival on 28 August 1983 – the group's final gig took place a week later in Nuremberg, Germany – Phil Lynott claimed he'd done everything in his power to prevent Lizzy from sinking.

"It's like when you blow your chick out although you didn't really mean it," he explained. "Your pride gets in the way. You can't go back and say anything, 'cos you're scared she might say 'No! F*ck off! I don't want you.'" The thought actually made Phil burst out in giggles as he spoke with Jeffries.

**THE SUDDEN** upturn in Lizzy's fortunes as they toured in support of 'Thunder And Lightning' had further muddied the waters. And Phil was prepared to admit that before the album the band had perhaps become complacent.

"If you do something for 10 years it's easy for it to become a habit," he said, adding that decreasing record sales, the expense of touring, and even the rise of rival groups had played their part in the decision to call it a day with the band. "You can become old-fashioned," he noted. "But interest really picked up the minute we said we were breaking up."

Lynott was full of praise for former Tygers Of Pan Tang man Sykes, whose playing had re-energised Lizzy in the wake of two previous albums – 1980's 'Chinatown' and 1981's 'Renegade' – recorded with Snowy White.

"Snowy taught us a lot with subtleties and blues – things like 'Renegade' and the slow version of 'Don't Believe A Word' really show his influences – but we were starting to get lethargic," mused Phil. "Then John came in, all power and energy. It was easier for him to learn the subtle bits than it had been for Snowy to learn the aggression, which was already in John – although he can be reflective too." But matters weren't helped by the fact that guitarist Scott Gorham and keyboard player Darren Wharton had already started looking over the horizon, with Sykes also planning a solo album.

"Darren and Scott have done some recording with John Taylor of Duran Duran," Phil revealed. "I just think... I get so much of the limelight that maybe it was time for the others to see just where they stood as far as their own popularity was concerned, rather than being 'someone in Thin Lizzy'."

This had become such an issue, Lynott claimed, that he'd been the one "trying to change everybody's minds" over calling it a day.

"You didn't think I'd just lie down and accept the thing, did you?" he hooted. "I was the only guy who *wouldn't* mind if Lizzy got back together again. That option is open to us," he confirmed. "I'm not saying we'll be back in six months, y'know? I mean, the reasons would have to be sincere rather than just for the bank accounts."

**TIME WOULD** tell, of course, but in the meantime that Reading festival performance beckoned. "It's a good way to finish," Lynott stated. "There'll be no gimmicks or guests. We'll just rehearse for a great open air gig with good sound – and go out in flames!"

# *ROCK CANDY* SAYS...

**ALTHOUGH MANY MIGHT ARGUE** that Philip Lynott *was* Thin Lizzy, the band has nonetheless returned from the grave many times without their charismatic leader. Lynott's reputation as a party animal preceded him, but Phil's death on 4 January 1986 from heart failure and pneumonia brought on by drug addiction still caught the nation by surprise. This wasn't supposed to happen.

**THE EXISTENCE** of a Lynott-less Lizzy is a subject that divides opinion. As recently as 2019 Scott Gorham, Darren Wharton and replacement frontman Ricky Warwick celebrated the 40th anniversary of the 'Black Rose' album with a special one-off show at the Steelhouse Festival in Wales. The band's rhythm section comprised members of Judas Priest and US metallers Mastodon. Faces from Aerosmith, Def Leppard, Europe, Guns N' Roses and Motörhead have also all passed through the Lizzy ranks, and given his comments about bank accounts, it's tempting to wonder what Lynott might have made of it all.

Gorham and Warwick, who led a touring incarnation of Lizzy between 2010 and 2012, opted against recording as Thin Lizzy, reconfiguring the group as Black Star Riders "out of respect to Phil Lynott and the legacy he created." It was the right decision. Four albums and many, many tours later, with Lizzy material all but expunged from the group's concerts, BSR now have a strong, independent character of their own.

**ONE THING** is for sure. Nobody forgot Philip Lynott. Though the band had been eligible for inclusion since 1996, Thin Lizzy were finally nominated for entry into the Rock & Roll Hall Of Fame as part of the Class Of 2020. Should they receive the nod, Gorham, drummer Brian Downey and guitarists Brian Robertson and Eric Bell would all be honoured at a star-studded ceremony. Sadly, like Lynott, Lizzy guitarist Gary Moore is no longer with us, having died in 2011 at the age of 58.

Lizzy performing at the Hammersmith Odeon, London, 10 March 1983. L-R: John Sykes (guitar), Phil Lynott (bass and vocals), Scott Gorham (guitar)

Photos: Getty Images/Pete Cronin/Redferns; Getty Images/Peter Still/Redferns

# STEP BACK IN TIME

The core Diamond Head line-up that recorded 'Canterbury'. L-R: Sean Harris (vocals), Brian Tatler (guitars), Merv Goldsworthy (bass)

## DIAMOND HEAD: SELF-CONFESSED "ARROGANT B*STARDS"

## DATELINE: 22 SEPTEMBER–5 OCTOBER 1983

## MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!*

**BACK IN '83 DIAMOND** Head had been left seething by a previous interview encounter with *Kerrang!*, claiming that their words were twisted to make them sound both egotistical and bigoted. Frontman Sean Harris was particularly angry about the article that had been penned by mild-mannered Neil Jeffries, claiming that the story's middle was edited out – an accusation the magazine denied. The controversy still hung in the air when Howard Johnson arrived to interview the Diamond ones for their third album, 'Canterbury'.

"What was on the page [last time] stood bare and naked without any thought behind it and that's not the way I am," Harris complained. "I think a great deal before I open my mouth, but that last story came over as arrogant." The singer then leant back in his chair and considered his statement before adding, "Maybe I am arrogant, but I ain't too bothered. I have a different mood for every day of my life, so I'll always say something different and interesting."

**ON PAPER**, the standoff might have worsened after Johnson was dispatched to fill the interviewer's chair. The writer was a cynic as far as Diamond Head were concerned, accusing the Stourbridge-based outfit not only of "an inappropriate aping of the bludgeon of Sabbath and Zep" but being "nothing more than an average heavy metal blues band with the good fortune to possess a first-rate vocalist." But instead of being a case of 'light the blue touch paper and stand well back', Harris and guitarist Brian Tatler agreed with many of the journalist's criticisms.

"Until now we'd never put down anything [on record] that we were even remotely happy with, but you just have to learn to live with those mistakes," admitted Harris. "Now we're going for a tighter, crisper sound – something not so dirge-like, because maybe all of our material up until now had fallen into that trap."

**DURING THE** gap between Diamond Head's sophomore set, the previous year's 'Borrowed Time', and 'Canterbury', Tatler and Harris had shed their original rhythm section of bass player Colin Kimberley and drummer Duncan Scott, initially replacing them with ex-Streetfighter bassist Merv Goldsworthy (who later joined FM) and session drummer Jamie Lane. Given the textures of their new music they were also looking to add a full-time keyboardist. Diamond Head had formed at school and the four members were childhood friends. But the singer and guitarist had decided they had to be ruthless...

"Duncan was nothing more than a hard rock drummer, and we wanted someone who could play anything from Zeppelin's 'Achilles Last Stand' to the new Police single," sighed Sean. "He didn't practise as much as he should."

**HOWEVER, THE** proof of the pudding was in the eating and Johnson proposed that rather than continuing to play "plodding, outmoded rubbish," the 'new' Diamond Head "now have something to crow about."

"Heavy rock in the 1980s has to give so much more than it used to," Tatler theorised. "We have to capture something that appeals to everybody. We're digging deep to find something sensitive enough to do so."

"We're always going to be labelled a heavy rock band, but we've changed," concluded Harris. "We wanted to be a classic four-piece in the Zeppelin mould, but now we want *everything*."

Photos: IconicPix/Ray Palmer Archive; Getty Images/Pete Cronin/Redferns

## *ROCK CANDY* SAYS...

**DIAMOND HEAD'S SENSE OF** ambition and bravado was laudable, but what happened next sadly gave them something of a reality check. In their quest for "something that could appeal to everyone," the band found a full-time drummer in the shape of Robbie France and they filled out the sound with keyboardist Josh Phillips-Gorse, who now plays with Procol Harum and co-wrote the main theme tune for BBC dance show *Strictly Come Dancing*.

"Arrogant bastards!"

However, DH were hit by a hammer blow when all 20,000 copies of the vinyl pressing of 'Canterbury' were found to jump, which was a real death knell in the pre-CD age. Speaking later, though, Brian Tatler was of the opinion that breaking up the original group was actually the biggest issue.

"We got a better drummer, but we didn't necessarily become a better band," he told me years later. "Look at somebody like U2. They stuck with their original line-up and despite the limitations of certain players it saw them through. Dunc and Col were the heart of the band and their replacements were just on a wage."

Diamond Head vocalist Sean Harris. Was he arrogant? Or just confident?

**WITH THE** benefit of hindsight it's hard not to feel a little sorry for Diamond Head. Sure, they were prone to running their mouths off a bit in interviews, but this was a band making its mistakes in public. For the sake of perspective Metallica, the whipper-snappers who came along and made multi-millions by plundering and adapting the Diamond Head formula, hadn't even released a proper album when 'Canterbury' hit the racks. There's nothing wrong with daring to shake the tree a little, and 'Canterbury' remains an album to cherish. It seems it just wasn't Diamond Head's time.

**SEAN HARRIS** quit the band for the third and final time in 2004, but Tatler's unswerving faith in Diamond Head continues unabated. And following the recruitment of frontman Rasmus Bom Anderson, some belated momentum has been rediscovered via two outstanding records in 2016's 'Diamond Head' and last year's 'Coffin Train'.

## SNIPPETS – SHORT, SHARP SHOCKS FROM SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1983

### BLACK SABBATH REALLY ARE 'BORN AGAIN' WITH IAN GILLAN

**DATELINE: 22 SEPTEMBER–8 OCTOBER 1983**
**MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!***

Though critical of the band's spot at the recent Reading Festival ("just plain embarrassing"), Neil Jeffries couldn't believe his ears when presented with the Gillan-fronted 'Born Again' album. Predicting it could appeal to fans from both camps, Jeffries declared it "possibly the meanest Sabbath album since 'Sabotage'."

### VENOM SEND A BAG OF WORMS TO DJ

**DATELINE: 8-21 SEPTEMBER 1983**
**MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!***

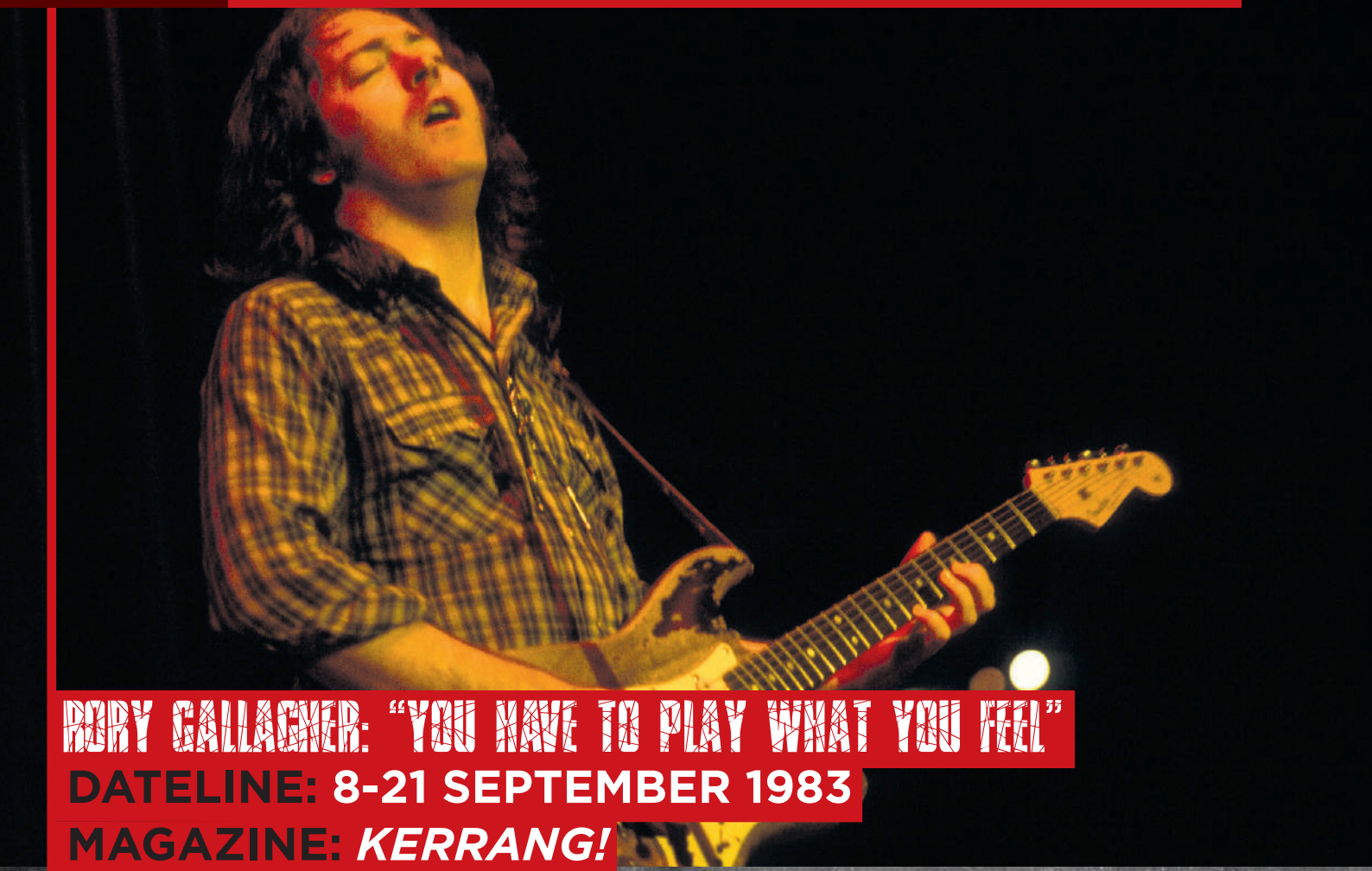
Bassist and vocalist Cronos admitted that Venom mailed a bag of worms to Newcastle radio DJ Alan Robson for the crime of not playing their records. Responding via the *Kerrang!* letters page Robson said, "In the past two years I've had only four requests for Venom tracks. Two of them came from the band!"

### CHEAP TRICK'S 'NEXT POSITION PLEASE' DISSED

**DATELINE: 6–19 OCTOBER 1983**
**MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!***

Malcolm Dome penned a brutal review of Cheap Trick's Todd Rundgren co-produced seventh studio album, suggesting it might be time for the band "to call it a day." Noting that Cheap Trick was in danger of losing its mojo, Dome added: "This is not so much a case of going through the motions as standing stock still buried under a welter of confusion."

# STEP BACK IN TIME



## RORY GALLAGHER: "YOU HAVE TO PLAY WHAT YOU FEEL"

**DATELINE: 8-21 SEPTEMBER 1983**

**MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!***

**A MONTH OR TWO** after Rory Gallagher and his band had performed two shows at London's famous Marquee Club as part of the venue's 25th anniversary celebrations, the fabled guitarist and singer sat down for a chinwag with writer Neil Jeffries.

Still basking in the pleasure of witnessing a hero in such an intimate setting, Jeffries began his story by noting the simplicity of the Irishman's performance. "A logo'd backdrop on his last UK tour was the closest Gallagher comes to Cecil B DeMille tactics," said Jeffries, before declaring the show "the most exciting I've watched in the past five years."

"You have to play what you *feel*," laughed Rory, stressing that final word. "If something feels stagey, made-up or too tricky, I don't like it. With a lot of those big, programmed bands touring's a military operation. We've worked with some of them and I don't envy the people involved. I don't like the heaviness, the pressure about them."

**ON THE** road promoting his 12th solo album, 'Jinx', Gallagher was happy working with his regular musicians. Bassist Gerry McAvoy had been with the guitarist since Rory disbanded Taste at the end of 1970, while Brendan O'Neill had been on board for a couple of years. Choosing to operate without a set list, Rory felt no pressure to play signature tracks live.

"There are certain songs I've never done early in the set and others that are usually kept for towards the end – that's about it really," Gallagher explained with a chuckle. "It's never that strict; we don't have a list. I just start a number and mouth it to the boys, or perhaps they'll recognise the intro. Maybe we'll blend out of one song and into another. Even in America, where you're obliged to do two shows at some club dates, we never do any of the same songs in our second set."

At the second Marquee Club show Gallagher and company had thrown in an unrehearsed version of the Eddie Floyd and Steve Cropper classic 'Knock On Wood'.

"We just improvised it," Rory smiled back. "We've a few standards like that we can just blend into the end of another song if the tuning is right – silly things like a couple of verses of a Four Tops song, or 'Eight Miles High' by the Byrds. Those things are just for the fun of it, they're semi-tongue-in-cheek."

**JEFFRIES WANTED** to know why the unplugged section of Gallagher's concerts, always a much-loved factor in the live shows, seemed to be getting shorter over the years.

"First of all, good acoustic music is not that easy to come by, believe it or not," replied Rory. "It's hard to find songs that are gritty enough with the audience in a set like ours. I can't do very soft ballads and very, very quiet acoustic songs unless it's a really attentive audience. But I do love to include at least a couple of those songs each night. I'd love to do a whole album of acoustic material, actually. Then I could cover everything from folky things right across to ragtime and country-blues. Between 12-string, mandolin, mandola and the dulcimer you could make a very interesting album."

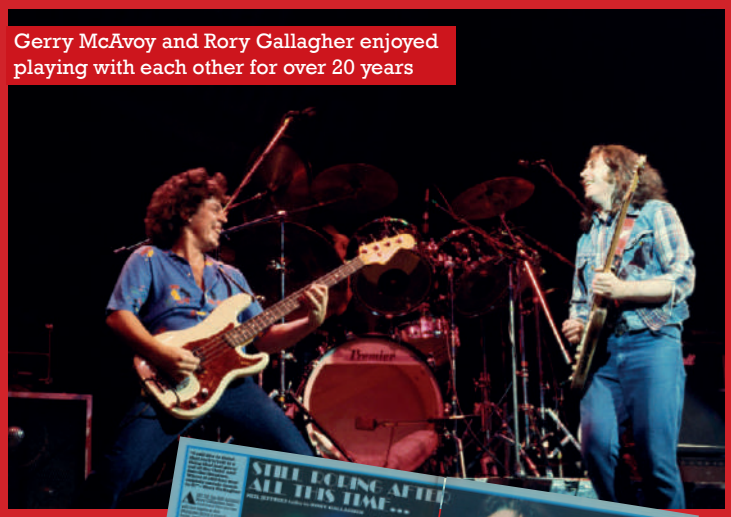
In closing he beamed: "I'll have to drink a few gallons of cider and see what comes out."

Photos: Getty Images/Paul Natkin; Getty Images/Fin Costello/Redferns

# *ROCK CANDY* SAYS...

**GALLAGHER'S HOPES FOR AN** unplugged record failed to come to fruition during his lifetime, which ended all too soon 12 years after this interview due to complications from a liver transplant. His liver had been damaged by addiction to alcohol and prescribed medication. He was just 47 years old.

However, a full-length collection of broad-ranging acoustic material titled 'Wheels Within Wheels' was released posthumously in 2003. That it featured his heroes and collaborators Bert Jansch, Lonnie Donegan and The Dubliners would, no doubt, have inspired another of the guitarist's impish grins.



Gerry McAvoy and Rory Gallagher enjoyed playing with each other for over 20 years

**THANKS TO** Rory's brother and manager Donal manning the tiller of the guitarist's recorded legacy, Gallagher's catalogue has been patiently maintained and even in some cases expanded. Last year's 'Blues' pulled together special guest spots with artists such as Muddy Waters and Albert King, together with some lost radio sessions from the years 1971 to 1994, to mark what would have been Gallagher's 50th year as a recording artist.

Yet in the quarter-century since his passing, and despite having sold 30 million albums, Rory's name is still overshadowed by the blues rock guitaring holy trinity of Page, Clapton and Beck. Donal doesn't believe that his sibling would have cared too much.

"My brother was a huge fan of those artists – he wouldn't have wanted to compete with them," he told me in 2003. "Rory might not have a string of quadruple platinum albums, but he now has streets named after him, and he was important enough to people's lives to appear on a postage stamp. That kind of recognition in his homeland is what would've given our mother the most comfort."

# SNIPPETS – SHORT, SHARP SHOCKS FROM SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1983

## SABBATH'S 'PARANOID' TOPS LIST OF ALL-TIME SINGLES

**DATELINE: 20 OCTOBER-2 NOVEMBER 1983**
**MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!***

A *Kerrang!* reader-voted Top 50 hailed Black Sabbath's 'Paranoid' as the best hard rock/metal single of all time, beating 'Whole Lotta Rosie' by AC/DC, the Iron Maiden pair of 'The Trooper' and 'The Number Of The Beast' and Twisted Sister's 'I Am (I'm Me)'. In the same issue the Led Zeppelin classic 'Stairway To Heaven' was hailed as the best-ever album track.

## LOW FAT SHARK

**DATELINE: 22 SEPTEMBER-8 OCTOBER 1983**
**MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!***

Preceding an eponymous debut album that would be released the following year, Great White frontman Jack Russell gave an entertaining interview where he claimed the band's concerts were attended by "mostly rock'n'roll people – long-haired and skinny. There are no fat people at our shows."

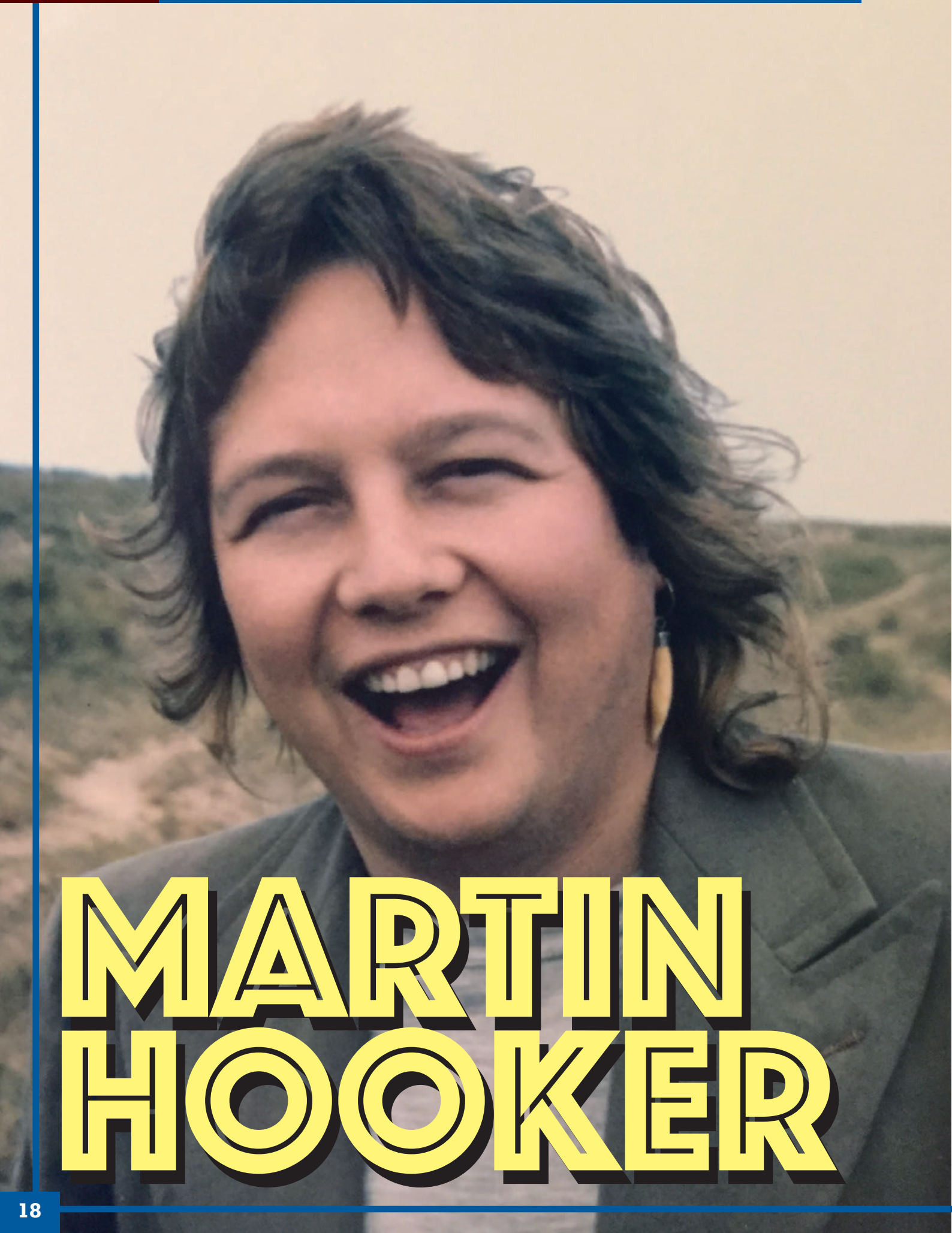
## MICHAEL SCHENKER TAKES ON THE PRESS

**DATELINE: 6-19 OCTOBER 1983**
**MAGAZINE: *KERRANG!***

Band spats were very real during the 1980s. After the pair traded verbal blows over the Michael Schenker Group's album 'Assault Attack', the guitarist claimed to have received a letter from *Sounds* writer Garry Bushell suggesting they both get together and talk, and "if that doesn't work, I'll break your legs." Michael promised: "If the letter is genuine I shall break his legs first."

# PERSON OF INTEREST

*ROCK CANDY* SALUTES THE MOVERS AND SHAKERS WHO DID THINGS DIFFERENTLY...



# MARTIN HOOKER

**MARTIN HOOKER LOVED A** lengthy lunch. On more than a few occasions back in the '80s he would entertain me and fellow *Rock Candy Mag* writers Xavier Russell and Jerry Ewing at the Andrea Doria restaurant in London. The place was conveniently located near the offices of Music For Nations, the independent heavy metal record company Hooker ran for so long. Our meal would always end with a bottle of grappa on the table. Martin didn't subscribe to the idea that eating should end with nothing more than a civilised sip of this Italian rocket fuel. It was all about slamming back a bunch of shots to finish things off in rowdy style. But that was Martin, a man with a big appetite for life – and a big appetite for music. He was always passionate in his pursuit of excellence, which is why Music For Nations became one of the most important rock and metal labels of all time.

**HOOKER WAS** a music businessman through and through. He worked in the marketing department at EMI for six years in the '70s, helping hone campaigns for the likes of Queen, Kraftwerk and Kate Bush. But he wanted more say in the artists he worked with, so founded his own Secret Records label in 1980, primarily as a means of developing punk and new wave acts. Hooker wasn't deaf to the charms of metal, though, and signed New York band Twisted Sister, releasing their debut album 'Under The Blade' in 1982. Guitarist Jay Jay French is in no doubt of Hooker's importance to his band's career.

"Quite simply, If Martin Hooker hadn't rescued Twisted Sister from the New York area club scene in 1982 by signing us to Secret Records and allowing us to record 'Under The Blade', then our 40-plus year history would have ended after just the 10th year," he says.

"Martin threw us a lifeline," he continues. "He rescued us from a club scene that was dying out, because the drinking age was being raised from 19 to 21. Martin Hooker let Twisted Sister live another day. Without his passion and belief I wouldn't still be here as Jay Jay French."

**HOOKER STARTED** Music For Nations in 1983 and it became the label that not only defined his career, but also played a crucial role in the development of some of the most important rock bands of the past four decades. In its early years the company gave metal acts that were then considered extreme – like Metallica, Slayer, Megadeth and Manowar – the opportunity to put out albums. These releases would go on to define metal music's evolution in the '80s.

Metallica's first three albums – arguably the most influential releases of their long career – all appeared on Music For Nations, so it's no surprise that the band have enormous respect for what Hooker did to help them in its earliest days.

"Thanks to Martin's unwavering support 'Kill 'Em All', 'Ride The Lightning' and 'Master Of Puppets' all went gold in the UK, and just as importantly, he and MFN helped make England a warm and welcoming place for us at a vital time in our career," said the band in paying tribute to one of their earliest mentors.

Manowar is another band that was grateful for Hooker's support. The band were so thrilled to sign for Music For Nations back in '83 that they even signed their contract with the company in blood!

"Martin and Music For Nations were there for us when no one else came forth," recalls guitarist Ross The Boss. "He helped us get to the next level."

**MARTIN ALWAYS** liked the outsiders, which is why an artist as left-field as Frank Zappa had enough confidence in the way the company was set up to put his entire back catalogue in MFN's hands.

All the same, Music For Nations was primarily about new talent and Hooker was particularly active in finding and developing rock bands from his native UK. Tigertailz and Cradle Of Filth were notable successes, though neither achieved the same status as one of the label's biggest British groups, Yorkshire band Paradise Lost. They signed to MFN in 1991 and over the following eight years released four albums via the label. Guitarist Aaron Aedy gives Hooker plenty of credit for his role in the band's development.

"Martin was someone I liked a lot," says Aedy. "He was a real music fan who loved his work, a no-nonsense guy who believed in us. Martin encouraged and allowed Paradise Lost the time and security to grow as a band, developing safe in the knowledge that he and MFN had our backs. He'd be excited to listen to our new music, not just because it was important to his business, but also because he was getting to hear it fresh off the reel before the rest of the world had been let in on it. Such honest enthusiasm for your art made you want to succeed for him, as well as for yourselves. Paradise Lost will always be grateful for Martin's passion, blood, sweat and beers during our most formative years."

**AFTER 21** years of bringing metal to the masses, Music For Nations finally closed its doors in 2004. The label was revived 11 years later as part of the major Sony organisation, though Martin was no longer involved by that point. Hooker went on to found Dream Catcher Records and released music from artists including Yngwie Malmsteen, Dave Meniketti and Warrior Soul. Sadly, though, he was forced to retire from the music business on health grounds and passed away at the age of 66 on 18 November last year.

Martin Hooker was a true music enthusiast who had the insight to allow the acts he signed to be creatively free, while using his undoubted business acumen to maximise each group's commercial potential. The catalogue of great music he leaves behind is testament to his talent and he would have been proud that this is how he'll be remembered. Rest in Peace Martin – and thanks for all the grappa! 💀

Words: Malcolm Dome

# CLASSIC ALBUM SLEEVE

Triumph in their element, playing live. Guitarist Rik Emmett and bassist Mike Levine, with drummer Gil Moore just visible in the background.

## TRIUMPH
## 'JUST A GAME'
### DATELINE: JANUARY 1979

Artist **Rene Zamic** (*right*) is still very proud of the evocative work he produced for the cover of the Canadian three-piece's third album...

**"I WAS BORN IN** Ontario, Canada, and went to art school in Toronto in 1969. After I graduated in 1972 I started my career as an artist, spending four years working for a well-known publishing company before striking out on my own as a freelance illustrator.

"I first worked with Triumph on the cover of their second Canadian album, 'Rock & Roll Machine', in 1977. I had a black and white photo to start from, and the process to get it the way the sleeve finally appeared was quite technical. I ended up with the three band members' faces overlapping, then touched the work up with stars and added some type. It kinda reminded me of something ELP might have done.

"The record company must have been happy with what I did, because the following year I got a call to put something together for the band's next album, which would be called 'Just A Game'. I was busy as hell at that time and they only gave me two weeks to produce something, but I didn't like to turn work down so accepted the commission.

**"I WORKED** off a sketch that the band's guitarist, Rik Emmett, gave me. He came to my house wearing big boots and with his white dog in tow to show me his idea. The big thing Rik wanted was to have a game board with a bird swooping down on it. I think the band wanted something that had the feel of the first Boston album, with the big guitar spaceship coming out of the sky. Of course the game board was related to the album title, something to depict that life is a game and it's all about chance. I guess that's very teenage kinda thinking, really.

"I had some reservations about how much stuff I'd be able to do with the game board, given the time constraints, and would have liked to have been able to add more detail, but that was the way it was. There wasn't much specific on Rik's pencil sketch, just a bird coming down with a basic check board and a few pieces on it. So I had pretty much free rein to do what I wanted. I did hear some of the music the band had recorded for the album, but if I'd had more time I would have listened to the songs more to try to make references to things they were writing about in the artwork itself.

"I sketched the original piece in pencil and then transferred it to an art board, where I used the technique of airbrushing to create the work. I used an overlay of frisket [a thin plastic sheet with an adhesive backing] to mask off parts of the work while I was working on specific items, individual bits. I didn't do anything freehand as I'm not really a painter. I didn't send the band anything as I worked on the piece. Well, maybe one sketch. I think everyone was up against the wall and they just needed the thing finished.

**"IF I** remember right I got $1500 for my work, which seemed a fair price. As time went on I got paid a lot more, but for the starving artist I was at that point it was fine. For those two weeks I just ate, slept and worked on the piece.

"When I finally finished I was very pleased with what I'd done, especially given the time constraints. Of course it was a pretty big piece, because it was actually a gatefold sleeve. It would've been nice if people could have seen all of it when they picked the album up in the racks, but that wasn't possible.

"Apparently the band really loved what I'd done and people have even said that 'Just A Game' took off partly because of my illustration. It really was a game-changing album for Triumph."

*Check out Rene's great work at* ***zamic.weebly.com*** *and at* ***www.reactorart.com/illustration-rene-zamic***

Interview by Howard Johnson. Photo: Getty Images/Paul Natkin

"The artist HR Giger was big at the time. He was working on the film *Alien* and I think he had a big influence on me when it came to the biomechanical bird, which is half machine, half animal. I spent a lot of time on the wings, the feathers and the claws, but even though it does look great I would have loved more time to develop it even further."

"I didn't design the band logo here. It was given to me before I started work on the sleeve. But I did adjust it so that the dimensions would be right and I have a feeling that when I first got it there was only one lightning bolt, so I'm guessing that I added another."

"Rik Emmett told me that he wanted the band members to be on the beak of the bird. I tried to think of how best to represent them and decided to try to make them look something like the Rolls-Royce symbol on the hood of their cars. I wanted them to come across as heroic figures. It wasn't about making the people look real, so I gave them a kind of golden metallic skin."

"I wanted the lights to fulfil two functions. The first was to look like landing lights on a plane, adding to the biomechanical feel of the bird. The second was to resemble the lights you might see at a concert to remind people that Triumph is very much a rock'n'roll band."

"For some reason I was thinking of the Appalachian Mountains when I came up with this part of the board. Looking back on it I should really have put Toronto on there."

"I don't think there was a specific reason for having a nude babe in a light bulb, but it seemed like a good idea at the time! What I do remember, though, is that even back in those days I was asked to tone it down a little bit."

"The dice are obviously there to represent the notion of chance that runs through the album and artwork. Looking back here, I tried to figure out if there was any reason for the particular numbers I went for at the time, but I'm not really sure that there was. Perhaps the three is for the three band members and the one is for me as the illustrator, but I don't honestly know."

"The album title typeface was nothing to do with me. It was added on to the artwork after I'd delivered it. It didn't bother me, though. I thought it looked fine."

## TRIUMPH – 'JUST A GAME'

Released: 10 January 1979. Album length: 35.58. Produced by Mike Levine. Recorded and mixed by Mike Jones. Assistant engineers: Doug Neil and Hugh Cooper. Recorded at Sounds Interchange Studios, Toronto, Canada.

***1. Movin' On (4.05)*** – *Gil Moore*
***2. Lay It On The Line (4.00)*** – *Rik Emmett*
***3. Young Enough To Cry (6.00)*** – *Gil Moore*
***4. American Girls (5.01)*** – *Gil Moore*
***5. Just A Game (6.10)*** – *Rik Emmett*
***6. Fantasy Serenade (1.40)*** – *Rik Emmett*
***7. Hold On (6.00)*** – *Rik Emmett*
***8. Suitcase Blues (3.02)*** – *Rik Emmett*

**LINE UP:**
**Rik Emmett** – guitars, vocals
**Mike Levine** – bass, keyboards
**Gil Moore** – drums, vocals

# YOU COULDN'T MAKE IT UP!

INSANE TALES FROM THE ANNALS OF ROCK

Robbo onstage with Lizzy. It's easier to play when your finger's not hanging off

## DATELINE: 23 NOVEMBER 1976

# BRIAN ROBERTSON NEARLY LOSES A FINGER, THEN LOSES HIS GIG

WHEN THE **THIN LIZZY** GUITARIST SHOULD HAVE BEEN HOME PREPARING FOR A US TOUR, HE SOMEHOW ENDED UP IN A&E WITH A CAREER-THREATENING INJURY…

**THIN LIZZY WAS A** band that operated on the edge of insanity. Frontman Phil Lynott's ability to write sensitive lyrics when the mood took him, and to deliver them in a surprisingly intimate way, was often in direct contrast to the band's macho operating environment. Drink and drugs provided much of the fuel that drove Lizzy in the days when most working rock bands were marching to the frenetic beat of an endless album-tour-album cycle. In 1976 Brian Robertson stood alongside American Scott Gorham as one half of Lizzy's distinctive twin-guitar attack. Gorham came across as a quiet and thoughtful man, but was in fact hiding his drug demons pretty well. Scotsman Robertson, by contrast, was putting all of his issues out there in the public domain, especially his huge capacity for alcohol.

Lizzy's manager at the time, Chris O'Donnell, reckoned Robertson's desire to smoke, drink and fight was born out of a need to gain the respect of hard-living Lynott, a man seven years his senior. But the 20-year-old got himself into some seriously hot water when his reckless behaviour led to the cancelling of an important US tour.

**LIZZY HAD** been making waves with their excellent sixth album, 'Jailbreak', and the record's standout track 'The Boys Are Back In Town', and America seemed to be finally waking up to the band. After the release of follow-up 'Johnny The Fox' in October of '76, Lynott, Gorham, Robertson and drummer Brian Downey were readying themselves to head to the States to spread the word.

On the night of 23 November Robbo should have been tucked up in bed getting some shut-eye ahead of the following day's flight to the US. What he was actually doing, though, was hanging out at London's Speakeasy club with his friend and fellow Scottish wildman musician, Frankie Miller. Robertson claimed he was stone cold sober when the band playing live at the Speakeasy, a soul/funk outfit called Gonzalez, asked him to get up to perform a number with them. He did admit, though, that Miller was totally "legless".

Robertson played, while Frankie wasn't invited to perform. So when the drunken singer tried to get on stage anyway, some of the members of Gonzalez weren't pleased. According to Robertson, when Miller started to make a nuisance of himself, Gonzalez's guitarist "smashed a bottle and went straight for Frankie's face."

Robertson gallantly stepped in to help his friend, putting his arm up to protect Miller's face. "The glass went straight through my fingers," Robertson told journalist Johnny Black. "Then sliced down and cut the tendons and nerves. It cut an artery as well, so there was blood spouting all over the stage."

Ray Minhinnett, Miller's guitarist, was also in the club

Words by Howard Johnson. Illustration by Christophe Sénégas. Photos: Getty Images/Pete Still/Redferns; Getty Images/Erica Echenberg/Redferns

and witnessed the entire incident. He ran and grabbed a couple of tea towels to wrap Robertson's badly damaged hand, which had one finger literally hanging by a thread. Together with Norman Watt-Roy, bassist with Ian Dury And The Blockheads, Minhinnett managed to get Robertson into a minicab and away to St Mary's Hospital in nearby Paddington, the blood still flowing profusely from his injuries.

**MANAGER CHRIS** O'Donnell got a call from Robertson at the hospital at two in the morning telling him what had happened. The guitarist had been operated on and his arm was now in a cast. Doctors told him he'd never play guitar again. O'Donnell went to fetch the errant Lizzy man and bundled him off home in a cab, before phoning Lizzy's other band members and crew to tell them the US tour was off.

According to Scott Gorham, Phil Lynott was "beyond livid" when he got the news and swore that Robertson's daft behaviour was a sackable offence. For his part Robertson claimed he immediately knew he'd blown his chances with Lizzy, even though he wasn't told that he was out of the band straight away. "I perfectly understood they had to get on with their career," he said.

With a new offer to tour the US with Queen on the table, Lizzy moved to bring back their former guitarist Gary Moore and Robbo was gone. Was that harsh? Not really, the Speakeasy incident wasn't the first Robertson-related problem the band had been forced to deal with. This was just the straw that broke the camel's back. "There was a multitude of sins that had gone before," said O'Donnell.

Brian looking a little the worse for wear in October 1976, just a month before the Speakeasy incident. "There was a multitude of sins."

**BRIAN ROBERTSON** says that to this day he still has no feeling in one of his fingers after the Speakeasy dust-up. Nonetheless, he soon proved the doctors wrong and was back playing guitar. He was credited on three tracks on the next Lizzy album, 1977's 'Bad Reputation', and even rejoined the band that year, before finally leaving for good in July of 1978. Yet despite stints in Wild Horses and Motörhead Robbo would never again scale the same heights he'd reached during his short, explosive, yet creatively fertile time in Thin Lizzy. Which can only leave us thinking, what if Frankie Miller hadn't got drunk that night... 💀

# CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

BIZARRE MEETINGS WITH BIZARRE ROCK STARS...

# DIRTY LOOKS

Dirty Looks with fiery frontman Henrik Ostergaard. L-R: Paul Lidel (guitar), Henrik Ostergaard (guitar and vocals), Gene Barnett (drums), Jack Pyers (bass)

*Derek Oliver* takes us back to 1989 and a meeting with **Dirty Looks** frontman **Henrik Ostergaard** that nearly ended up in fisticuffs!

**I WAS ONCE INVOLVED** in a potentially dangerous close encounter with the wild-eyed, Danish-born lead singer of Dirty Looks – and all because of a case of mistaken identity.

At the time I was working in New York as an A&R executive at Atco Records, the well-regarded sister label to Atlantic Records. We occupied one entire floor of 75 Rockefeller Plaza, the iconic building in Midtown Manhattan that housed all of the Warner Music Group's labels. It was a place where you could go to work and play loud music all day long, and of course I was in seventh heaven.

**ONE OF** my best friends at the time was Frankie LaRocka, who worked on the floor below me for Atlantic. Unlike me, Frankie had serious musician cred. He'd seen Jimi Hendrix live and had subsequently become a fearsome drummer, playing in a number of bands and developing a career as a 'go to' session man. Frankie was also a huge character and one of the best A&R people around at the time; one of his most successful signings was The Spin Doctors. As an Italian American with jet-black hair, he liked to give the impression that he was 'connected', if you get my drift, and always wore shades to reinforce that vibe.

One of the bands Frankie was working with at Atlantic was Dirty Looks, a Philadelphia-based outfit that had caught my attention with their 1988 album 'Cool From The Wire', one of the best records I'd ever heard. Like Frankie, I was always attracted to four-to-the-floor shuffles and, like AC/DC, Dirty Looks had that in spades.

**ONE DAY** I bumped into Frankie in the street, with Dirty Looks frontman Henrik Ostergaard in tow. They were both staggering back from a slap-up lunch and Frankie suggested we listen to some new music up in my office. We trundled up in the elevator and shut the office door and it was only then that Frankie, with a wicked smile on his face, announced to Henrik that my name was Dave, and that I used to be a journalist for *Kerrang!*

**AT FIRST** I played along, thinking it was funny, but without realising the gravity of the situation. The 'Dave' in question was actually my former *Kerrang!* colleague Dave Reynolds who'd apparently made some derisory comment about Dirty Looks in print. Henrik wasn't a man to turn the other cheek easily and was clearly ready to kick-off big time. Frankie had been winding him up about 'Dave' for a while already and I could tell that Henrik was on edge. I started remonstrating that I really wasn't the journalist in question, and that my name definitely wasn't Dave. But Frankie piled on the agony, insisting that I was just trying to squirm my way out of the situation. At first I'd found it all amusing, but the more Henrik's blood boiled and the veins in his neck bulged, the more it became clear that this was becoming a very uncomfortable standoff. I'm no lightweight pushover, but Henrik gave the impression that he was a street rat who'd seen his fair share of tough times. A dust-up probably wasn't a good idea...

**SOMEHOW I** managed to get Henrik to do some kind of 180-degree dance around my desk, with Frankie grinning madly in the background all the while. Eventually I succeeded in getting closest to the door, which provided an escape route that I quickly used. But it was such a successful wind up that, long after the whole thing had blown over, Frankie still couldn't convince Henrik that I really wasn't Dave Reynolds.

Sadly, I never the chance got to laugh about this case of mistaken identity with Henrik before he died at the age of just 47 in 2011.

# MY FIRST GIG

**DATELINE: 25 NOVEMBER 1979, DALY CITY, CALIFORNIA**

# "GENE DRIBBLED BLOOD ON ME!"

**DEATH ANGEL** GUITARIST **ROB CAVESTANY** JUMPS BACK TO 1979 WHEN HE SAW **KISS** SHOUTING IT OUT LOUD IN CALIFORNIA…

**"I REMEMBER MY FIRST** gig really well. It was in 1979 when Kiss played at the Cow Palace in Daly City, which is close to San Francisco. I was just 11 years old at the time and was obsessed with the band. I loved Gene Simmons, because I really liked his character of The Demon. I even used to dress up as him. What's really funny, actually, is that when we were kids the four of us who would eventually become Death Angel would all get into full Kiss make-up and pretend we were the band! Mark [Osegueda, vocals] was Ace Frehley, Dennis [Pepa, bass] was Paul Stanley and Andy [Galeon, drums] was Peter Criss.

**"IT WAS** my mum and Dennis's mum who bought us tickets for the Kiss show and they also came along to the gig with us. Naturally us kids were in full Kiss make-up. I did my own, because I'd heard that was what Gene did, so I was never gonna let my mother anywhere near me for that! I knew all the Kiss songs before we went to the show. I think I'd just picked up the 'Dynasty' album and spent ages learning those numbers back to front so that I was more than ready for the fun that was to come.

**"HEARING THE** roar of the Kiss crowd that night, feeling the energy coming off the stage and then sensing it bounce back up there from the fans in the arena was like a drug to me. It was close to being a religious experience! We all got as close as we could to the front of the stage, which was probably a bit easier than you might expect because we were so young. We weren't very big, so we could kind of squirm our way through.

"Being that close to the band was awesome. It was everything we'd hoped for and more. At one point Gene looked in our direction and when he dribbled blood some of it actually landed on me, which was really exciting. The trouble was, such an incredible spectacle probably spoilt us. We expected every live performance we ever saw to be as incredible as Kiss's, and of course that wasn't true. It didn't take long for us to understand that nobody else puts on a show quite like Kiss.

Rob and his Death Angel pals paying homage to Kiss when they were kids

**"I HAVE** to say that the gig truly was a life-changing experience. Seeing Kiss was the thing that really inspired the four of us to start learning instruments and form our own band. Death Angel truly began on 25 November 1979 – and you can blame Kiss for the fact that we exist!

"We actually got to meet Gene in the late '80s, when he was interested in managing Death Angel. We went to New York to see him, but it turned out to be an unpleasant experience. Gene treated us as if we were a band that knew all the angles in the music business, just like he did. He made no allowance for the fact we were very young and very naïve, so it never went anywhere. And I was so overawed by the experience that I never even told him how that '79 show had had such a profound impact on my life. Oh well, never mind. Perhaps my experience proves the old adage that you should never meet your heroes!" 💀

Interview by Malcolm Dome. Photos: Getty Images/Paul Natkin; Getty Images/Steve Jennings/WireImage

# MONSTERS OF ROCK

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Cheap Trick's Rick Nielsen and Robin Zander performing in the early '80s. Who says it was the decade of excess?

# When The Trick No Longer Works

**Cheap Trick** smashed it at the end of the '70s with their '...At Budokan' and 'Dream Police' albums. But the '80s suddenly saw them fall from commercial grace before writing collaborations finally saved their bacon. *Malcolm Dome* talks to guitarist **Rick Nielsen** about surviving a career slump...

Photo: Getty Images/Paul Natkin

**LISTEN, WHAT'S THAT NOISE?** That's right, it's the sound of '70s rock giants crashing back down to earth with an almighty bump in the '80s.

After the departure of Ronnie James Dio in 1982, Black Sabbath spent the rest of the decade in a state of perpetual confusion. ZZ Top had to totally revamp their style on 1983's 'Eliminator' to prosper in the new era. Heart needed to ditch their own particular brand of hard rock whimsy and reinvent themselves as super MTV-friendly shiny people on their eponymous 1985 album to climb the ladder back to the top. And even AC/DC weren't immune to the chill wind of failure as proven on 1985's 'Fly On The Wall' release. And then, of course, there's the case of Cheap Trick. You might have thought that the Rockford, Illinois quartet's radio-friendly, super ear-wormy music would have seen them avoid the early-'80s hard rock recession. Not so, I'm afraid to say.

"EVERY SUCCESSFUL BAND GOES THROUGH A TIME IN THEIR CAREER WHEN PEOPLE DON'T WANT TO KNOW. EVEN THE ROLLING STONES HAVE HAD RECORDS THAT DIDN'T DO MEGA-BUSINESS. DOES THAT MAKE THEM FAILURES? OF COURSE IT DOESN'T."

**IN 1979** Cheap Trick – vocalist and guitarist Robin Zander, guitarist Rick Nielsen, bassist Tom Petersson, and drummer Bun E. Carlos – appeared to be unstoppable. The band's 'Cheap Trick At Budokan' live album had hit number four in the US *Billboard* charts and number 29 in the UK, while the 'Dream Police' album had proved the band was no one-hit wonder when it stormed to number six in the States. Cheap Trick notched four US Top 40 singles from those two records alone, and it looked for all the world as if the group was in for a prolonged period of commercial success. That's not how things worked out, though. Things initially started to unravel as the band were working with Beatles producer George Martin on 'All Shook Up', the follow-up to 'Dream Police', in 1980. Tom Petersson decided to quit the band in August of that year.

"Tom wanted his own career," explains Rick Nielsen. "He felt that it was time for him to be a solo performer, so he actually quit on us while we were still working on 'All Shook Up'. He did his parts while we were at Air Studios in Montserrat, but when we came over to Air in London to finish off Tom didn't want to come with us. I ended up playing some of the bass on that record."

With an important tour of Japan already booked, the band had very little time to find a suitable replacement for Petersson. They turned to Pete Comita, who'd just been fired by Foghat after a very brief stint in that band as a slide guitarist.

"We already knew Pete," explains Nielsen. "We knew he was a good bassist and guitarist, and because we had so little time to make a decision we went with him. He was a big fan of Cheap Trick and knew all of our songs, so that made him a serious contender. It was either him or a guy called Jon Brant."

**BRANT WOULD** eventually become part of the Cheap Trick story, but not before the band had become embroiled in an acrimonious lawsuit launched against both them and their manager, Ken Adamany, in July of 1981. The multi-million-dollar suit was brought by CBS Inc., the parent company of Cheap Trick's own record label, Epic. In it, the company claimed that Adamany and the band were delaying recording a new album in an attempt to renegotiate a more favourable contract. The situation still clearly irks Nielsen.

"Look, what happened was that we were fed up with Tom Werman getting royalties for his supposed 'work' as our producer," he says.

This comment might cause some raised eyebrows. After all, the much-praised CBS in-house producer and A&R man Werman was credited with production on three successful Cheap Trick albums – 1977's 'In Color', 1978's 'Heaven Tonight', and 1979's 'Dream Police'. All three releases are regarded as among the most important of the band's career. Yet Nielsen disputes how much influence Werman had on them...

"I know he's down on the credits as the producer, but he was getting money for stuff he didn't do! It's as simple as that. In reality, the band should have been getting those payments and not Werman. We made a stand at the time and wanted things to be changed in our favour. We wanted a contract that more accurately reflected what really happened in the studio. Can you blame us? Would any band be happy to hand over money to someone for work they hadn't done? I doubt it."

Werman refutes Neilsen's claims. In an interview with *legendaryrockinterviews.com* he said: "During 'In Color' and 'Heaven Tonight', I would repeatedly solicit the band's opinion, and Rick's typical response was 'You're the producer.' He's claimed in print that I wasn't even present at sessions I can clearly remember. There was not one single session I did not produce.

"All four members of Cheap Trick were just about the best I've ever worked with in the studio – competent, cooperative and fast. No fooling around when it came to work – only when it came to humour. If we experimented with sound in the studio, they would focus and we'd reach a decision very quickly – no wandering the halls for 'something different'. Rick had very interesting ideas. I honestly think 'Heaven Tonight' and 'Dream Police' represented a very strong combination of band and producer."

Apparently things were eventually smoothed out between the two warring factions, band and record company, but it still left a bitter taste in the mouth.

"To be honest with you, I can't really remember the terms of the eventual agreement we came to with Epic," says Nielsen. "But we were definitely very bitter about the label's attitude toward us. You'd have thought they would have accepted what we said and would have taken our side. After all, we'd sold a lot of records for them and had made the company a lot of money. Cheap Trick was one of Epic's biggest acts, so it was surely in their best interests to back us. But for whatever reason they chose to defend Werman in this dispute. We were really annoyed about what had happened and

# DARK DAYS

how Epic had treated us. If we'd had the opportunity to leave the label at that point I'm sure we would have done it. But we were under contract and it would have been very difficult for us to move on. So we were stuck with them for a good few years."

**DESPITE ALL** this, with Pete Comita in the band and legal issues behind them, you would have thought that Cheap Trick would have been able to get back to the business of making music without any distractions. But this didn't prove to be easy...

"When we first brought Pete in, our immediate need was for someone to play live," confirms Nielsen. "I'd finished off the bass lines for 'All Shook Up' [which was released in October of 1980], but we couldn't tour without a bassist. The thing was, Pete had certain problems that I won't go into. Let's say they came from his rock'n'roll lifestyle and leave it at that. But the upshot was we needed to get somebody else." Enter Jon Brant, who'd played bass in two Chicago bands with Pete Comita on guitar, d'Thumbs and Stardriver.

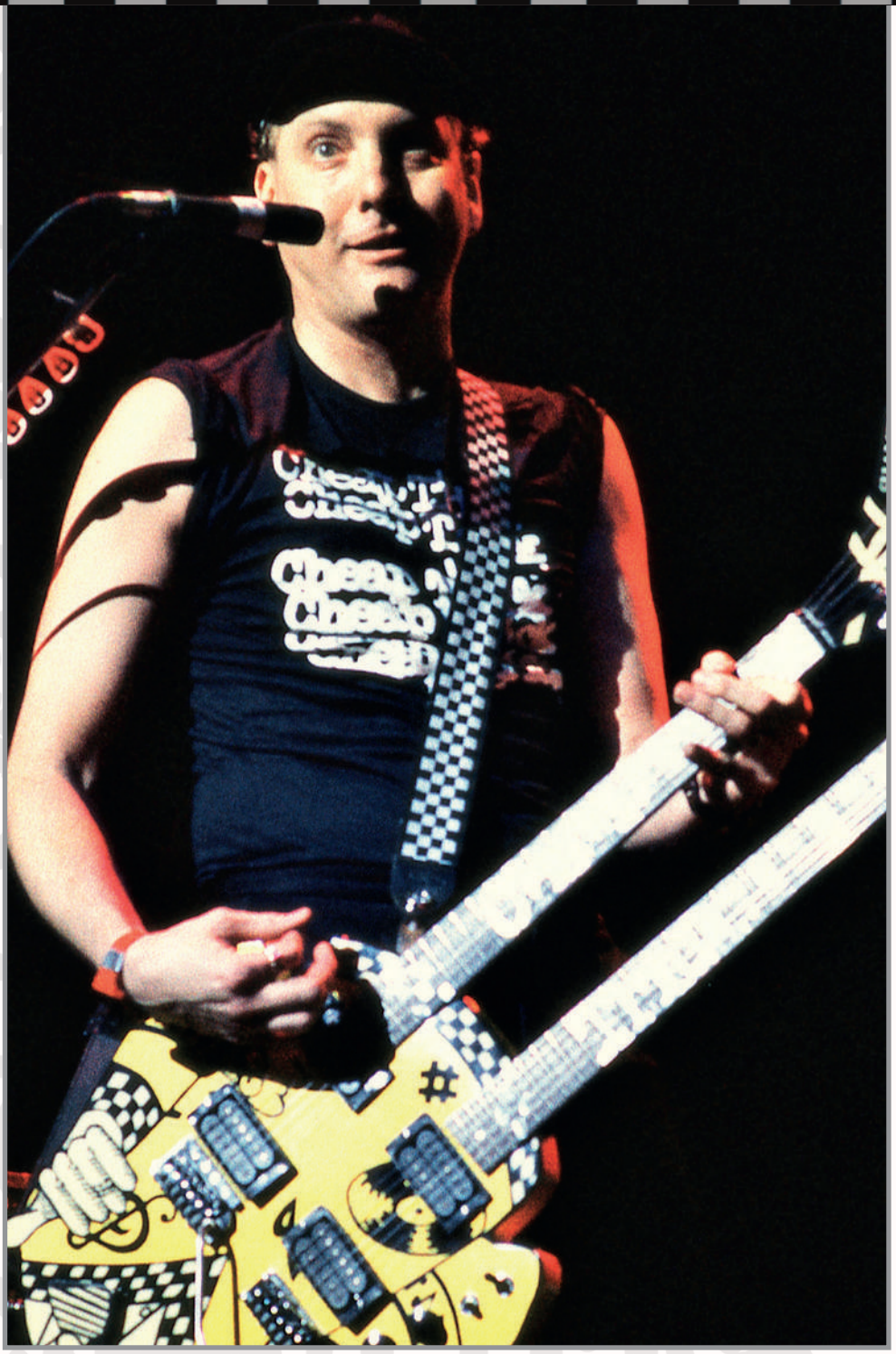
"As you know, we'd considered Jon Brant as the original replacement for Tom Petersson before we decided on Pete," says Nielsen. "And strangely enough we kept seeing Jon all the time, because he used to drive Pete to rehearsals. So when we got rid of Pete we had the perfect replacement right on our doorstep.

"Pete Comita only played on one studio song in Cheap Trick," continues Rick. "That was 'Reach Out', which featured on the soundtrack for the [1981] film *Heavy Metal*. He wasn't with us when we recorded any of the next album, 'One On One'. I did most of the bass on that, and Jon Brant did a little work on it as well."

Comita claims he contributed to this 1982 album and didn't receive any credit for his work. He also insists that he wrote the song 'I Can't Take It', which eventually appeared on 1983's 'Next Position Please' album and is credited to Robin Zander.

"That was a combination of two songs I'd written before I joined Cheap Trick," he told *12stringbass.net*. "I quit the band during the recording of the album 'One On One'. Most of the bass playing on that record is me."

But Nielsen refutes Comita's claim. "Pete is deluded about this, no question. It's not his song. The only tune he wrote for us was 'Reach Out', which he did with Bob James, the old Montrose singer. He wrote nothing



"LABELS SURE WEREN'T LOOKING FOR THE NEXT CHEAP TRICK IN THE '80S. HOT YOUNG BANDS WERE GETTING ALL THE ATTENTION, AND THAT'S AS IT SHOULD BE. DID IT BOTHER US? NOT REALLY."

Photos: Julia Goode; Getty Images/Paul Natkin

Robin filming a video for the 1984 single, 'Up The Creek'. In many ways Cheap Trick really were at this point…

else. And if Pete is so sure 'I Can't Take It' is his composition, then why has he never sued Robin over it?"

**BRANT WAS** officially installed as the bassist in Cheap Trick by the time 'One On One' was released in April of 1982, but the album was a disappointment. Produced by well-respected studio man Roy Thomas Baker, it did feature the classy 'If You Want My Love', but when that song was released as a single it failed to make the US *Billboard* Top 40. The album itself peaked at an underwhelming number 39 and despite eventually going gold in the US, 'One On One' marked the start of a bleak run for the band. The next release, 'Next Position Please' in 1983, was an artistic ball of confusion. The band brought in Todd Rundgren as producer, but this didn't help what turned out to be a very poor album that suggested Cheap Trick really had lost their mojo. Neither of the two singles lifted from the album, 'I Can't Take It' and a cover of The Motors' 'Dancing The Night Away', broke into the US *Billboard* Top 100.

In an attempt to halt the slide the band went back to Jack Douglas, the man who'd produced their very first album, 'Cheap Trick', back in 1977. 1985's 'Standing On The Edge' was a more focused collection of songs and 'Tonight It's You' was an undeniably great tune. But the fact that it only made it to number 44 in the US suggested that the band's commercial stutter was far from over.

> "OUR LABEL AND MANAGEMENT HAD BEEN TRYING TO CONVINCE US THAT IT WAS BEST TO BRING IN OTHER WRITERS FOR A FEW YEARS. WE'D ALWAYS RESISTED. IN THE END WE WENT ALONG WITH THE IDEA, BUT IT DID FEEL LIKE A SLAP IN THE FACE TO BE FORCED DOWN THIS ROUTE."

In a bid to get back on top Cheap Trick knew they needed to make a really radical move…

"I've been a big fan of Jeff Lynne since his days with the Idle Race, even before ELO," explains Nielsen. "So we tried to get Jeff to produce our next album, 'The Doctor'. I met Jeff and gave him a cassette of one song we were working on for the album. He took it away, listened to it, and then told me that we didn't need him, and that we should record the album without him. I knew he was wrong, because someone of his calibre would have brought something immense to the project. As a writer and producer I know he would have improved what we did. Maybe I should have tried a lot harder to convince Jeff that we needed him. But as it was, we accepted what he said and moved forward without him.

The band then looked to Robert John 'Mutt' Lange, the man who'd masterminded Def Leppard's sonic revolution and their huge commercial success.

"We had discussions with the Zomba Group, who managed Mutt," Rick explains. "But they told us that he wasn't available [because he was knee-deep in the production of Def Leppard's 'Hysteria' album at the time]. Instead, Zomba persuaded us to go with Tony

# DARK DAYS

Platt, whom they insisted was every bit as good as Mutt. We believed them, so Tony got to produce 'The Doctor'. No disrespect to him, but Tony Platt wasn't the right person for us."

Released in November of 1986, 'The Doctor' proved not to offer any kind of cure for the band's ills. It was the worst performing Cheap Trick album since the band's debut and didn't even make the US *Billboard* Top 100. And as an example of just how far Cheap Trick's stock had fallen, 'Mighty Wings' – a song the band recorded for the soundtrack to blockbuster movie *Top Gun* – also failed to make any headway when it was released as a single.

"'If only' is an irrelevant term," muses Nielsen. "But I do understand that we did ourselves no favours by not persuading Jeff or Mutt to work with us back then."

**THESE DAYS** the guitarist is fairly philosophical about the band's dark period in the '80s.

"Every successful band goes through a time in their career when people just don't want to know," he says. "Even the Rolling Stones have had records that didn't do mega-business. Does that make them failures? Of course it doesn't. In the late '70s every label wanted to sign a band like Boston, because of what they'd done on their debut album. But a decade later that was no longer the case.

"Labels sure weren't looking for the next Cheap Trick in the '80s. Hot young bands were getting all the attention, and that's as it should be. Did it bother us? Not really. We always saw ourselves as essentially a live act, and even when we weren't selling a lot of records we were still able to go out on tour and attract good crowds."

Cheap Trick's fortunes finally started to change for the better in 1987, and the catalyst for the band's revival was first and foremost the return of original bassist Tom Petersson.

"I'd not seen Tom for several years," recalls Nielsen. "But I bumped into him at a birthday party for [Duran Duran bassist] John Taylor in New York. There were loads of cool people around and Tom was at the bar. He came over to talk to me and was obviously drunk. The first thing he did was spill his beer in my lap! But after we got over that Tom said, 'We should get back together.' What he suggested was that we should do an offshoot of Cheap Trick with Robin, him and me. It sounded like an interesting idea and we even had one rehearsal. But the three of us felt that if we were going to work together again, then it made sense to bring in [Cheap Trick drummer] Bun E. Carlos and simply call ourselves Cheap Trick.

"We told Jon Brant that Tom was coming back and he accepted it without any argument. In a way I wish Jon had been more prepared to fight for the job he'd had for

Cheap Trick photographed at the Poplar Creek Music Theater, Chicago, 20 September 1985. L-R: Jon Brant (bass), Rick Nielsen (guitar), Robin Zander (vocals and guitar), Bun E. Carlos (drums)

Photos: Getty Images/Ebet Roberts/Redferns; Getty Images/Ron Galella Collection; Julia Goode

Robin Zander gives bassist Pete Comita a kiss while performing at the premier party for the movie *Heavy Metal*, Guggenheim Museum, New York, 29 July 1981. The love didn't last…

Bassist Jon Brant, who was with Cheap Trick during their '80s slump

nearly six years. But he obviously believed it made sense for the future of Cheap Trick to get the classic set-up back in harness."

**REUNITED WITH** their best line-up, Cheap Trick made another hugely significant move when they agreed to work with outside songwriters. This was a relatively new trend at the time, but it had already reaped big rewards for other hard rock artists whose commercial clout had receded, including Alice Cooper and Aerosmith.

"It wasn't something we wanted to do," admits Nielsen. "Our label and management had been trying to convince us that it was best to bring in other writers for a few years already. A lot of our producers had been on about doing it as well, but we'd always resisted. In the end, though, we went along with the idea, but it did feel like a slap in the face to be forced down this route."

Whatever Nielsen's initial reservations, the results spoke for themselves. The band's next album, 1988's 'Lap Of Luxury', was packed to the hilt with co-writes and the record-buying public absolutely lapped it up. 'The Flame', written by the team of Bob Mitchell and one-time Atomic Rooster member Nick Graham with no band input, became one of the biggest songs of Cheap Trick's career, making it all the way to the coveted number one spot on the US singles chart. A cover of the Elvis Presley standard 'Don't Be Cruel', meanwhile, raced to number four, as the album took Cheap Trick back into the *Billboard* Top 20.

"We were actually over in England when 'The Flame' got to number one," remembers Nielsen. "So it all seemed a little remote. We never really got the chance to celebrate properly. But despite the success, working with top writers like Diane Warren did feel a little forced. You can't argue with the results, but 'Lap Of Luxury' never felt like a true Cheap Trick album to me. What it did, though, was allow the band to carry on – and we're still going strong more than 30 years later!"

**WITH HINDSIGHT** Nielsen can see some positives in the four albums – 'One On One', 'Next Position Please', 'Standing On The Edge' and 'The Doctor' – that marked the band's commercial low point.

"There were some decent songs on all of those records," he insists. "I don't think any of them was a complete disaster, even though they've been harshly criticised over the years. People should go back and listen to them again and I'm sure they'll realise that they aren't at all bad.

"Maybe things would have been different and those records might have sold better if we'd been able to leave Epic and sign to a new label when we first had our disputes with them. I don't believe that company did us any favours. But we were under contract and had to go along with what they did – or rather didn't do – to promote those albums. But if you have a long career like ours there will always be dips. You have go through those periods to appreciate the good times. And believe me, I really do appreciate what we have now because of the struggles we had back then."

Metallica photographed in 1985. L-R: Kirk Hammett (guitar), James Hetfield (vocals and guitar), Lars Ulrich (drums), Cliff Burton (bass)

# THE MAKING OF METALLICA'S 'RIDE THE LIGHTNING' AND 'MASTER OF PUPPETS'

**Producer Flemming Rasmussen on putting together the two albums that took thrash mainstream and changed the face of metal...**

***NOW AGED 61, DANISH*** *producer Flemming Rasmussen first got into music listening to his older brother's Rolling Stones albums, quickly followed by Hendrix, Led Zep, Deep Purple and Uriah Heep. Immediately curious to understand how the sounds these bands produced were captured on vinyl, Flemming was soon buying stereos and speakers "while everyone else was tuning up the motors on their mopeds."*

*Having got his hands on a reel-to-reel tape recorder, Flemming started playing at parties, putting together what would now be called mix tapes. "I'd take my favourite album tracks and edit them together by splicing the tapes," he explains. "I had these 10 inch reels of quarter inch tape with my favourite music that never stopped – and it was always rock music of course, stuff like Foreigner and Boston. I was fiddling about with tape long before I started working in a recording studio."*

*After doing a week's work experience at a studio just outside Copenhagen with a producer named Freddy Hansson, Flemming got his big break when Hansson called him to say that he was going to build a new studio in the centre of the Danish capital and that he wanted Rasmussen to work there as his engineer. That studio was Sweet Silence, which opened for business in 1976 when Flemming was just 18 years old. "I was professional from the start," he says. "I was recording and mixing 24/7."*

*Rasmussen became co-owner of the studio in 1980 and produced his first major international session with Rainbow that same year. Ritchie Blackmore's band then came back to Sweet Silence to record 'Difficult To Cure' later that year and Flemming worked as engineer on the record for producer and band bassist Roger Glover.*

*Rasmussen worked as producer on three of Metallica's most influential albums – 'Ride The Lightning' in 1984,*

*1986's 'Master Of Puppets' and 1988's '...And Justice For All' – and also won a 1989 Grammy for his production work on the band's major US hit, 'One'. Aside from Metallica and Rainbow he has worked with a number of other metal acts including Morbid Angel, Blind Guardian, Pretty Maids and Evile.*

**SO FLEMMING, HOW DID YOU FIRST COME INTO CONTACT WITH METALLICA?**
"I'm pretty sure the first thing that happened was that [drummer] Lars [Ulrich] called me up directly in late '83 or early '84 and asked if I'd be interested in doing an album with them. The band had heard 'Difficult To Cure' and really liked what I'd done. The album Lars was talking about turned out to be 'Ride The Lightning'. He said that the band's style was hard rock or metal, but to be honest I had no idea Metallica even existed before I got that call."

**WERE THERE ANY OTHER REASONS WHY YOU GOT THE GIG BESIDES THE RAINBOW FACTOR?**
"Sure. They knew they could get twice the amount of studio time in Europe that they could afford in the States because the dollar was strong at the time. Plus they weren't satisfied with the way their previous album, 'Kill 'Em All', had been recorded. They would have liked to do a lot more to that. So they were looking for a good studio with a good in-house engineer – and I fit the bill."

**SO HOW DID IT WORK? DID YOU DO LOTS OF PRE-PRODUCTION FOR 'RIDE THE LIGHTNING'?**
"We did nothing at all together. The band just showed up at the studio and I hadn't heard anything. It was a bit ad hoc, really. Metallica were on tour in Europe to make money to do the album and a lot of their equipment got stolen, including [singer and guitarist] James [Hetfield]'s rhythm guitar amp. That amp had been modified, but nobody had bothered to work out what the modifications were. So we started the recording process for 'Ride The Lightning' by listening to 'Kill 'Em All' a lot, because James really liked the guitar tone on that amp that he'd got for that album. I had a lot of friends in metal bands in Denmark, like Mercyful Fate and Maltese Falcon, so they came to the studio with their Marshall amps and cabs and heads. We spent a day figuring out which amp to use with what cabinet to get the best possible sound, cross-referencing 'Kill 'Em All' the whole time."

**THRASH METAL WAS PRETTY NEW AT THE TIME AND YOU WERE A TRADITIONAL ROCKER. WHAT DID YOU MAKE OF THE NOISE METALLICA WERE MAKING?**
"I absolutely loved it from the start. It was right up my alley and in fact I thought it was the best thing I'd ever heard. There was one point during the recording of 'Ride The Lightning', though, when Freddy Hansson pulled me to one side. He came from a jazz background, so to him Metallica was probably the worst thing he'd ever heard. He said 'Are you OK, Flemming? They're horrible aren't they?' I said, 'What are you talking about? This is the best thing I've ever done! Listen to that energy.' I told the band they'd definitely come to the right guy. I listened to 'Kill 'Em All' and said 'Yeah, we can do that, but better.' And even now I think 'Ride The Lightning' sounds pretty good. James was real happy with his guitar sound."

**WHAT WERE THE FOUR GUYS IN THE BAND – JAMES, LARS, BASSIST CLIFF BURTON AND GUITARIST KIRK HAMMETT – LIKE AT THAT TIME?**
"We were together a lot, of course, and got close pretty quick. We all got along well. I'm three or four

Photo: Getty Images/Fin Costello/Redferns

# EYEWITNESS

DATELINE: FEBRUARY-MARCH 1984 AND SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 1985

The band photographed at the Royal Oak Music Theatre, Michigan, 1 February 1985. "It was kind of obvious that big things were happening for Metallica."

years older than them, so they thought it was funny to call me Daddy. I was the older guy who could make sure that things happened. But they were all pretty focused on what they were doing too, so things went well."

**DID IT HELP THAT YOU AND LARS ARE BOTH DANISH?**
"Probably, yeah. But even then I was pretty fluent in English, so language wasn't a problem. I guess Lars might have felt more at home here in Denmark. I do remember that occasionally we'd talk Danish together and just throw in the word 'James' at random times, even though we weren't even talking about him. That drove James crazy!"

**WHAT WAS SPECIAL ABOUT SWEET SILENCE AS A STUDIO?**
"Well it was a big, old factory building with a 100 metre square recording room. It had two booths in the back and a pretty big control room. We also had another room that hadn't really been refurbished. It was just wooden beams and brick walls, but that was where we stuck Lars's drums to help us get a big, ambient sound. I placed some mics out there and that's where we recorded the drums, but it wasn't easy actually, because the room tended to get cold at night and that would send the drums out of tune. If they'd been standing there all day with no heating and then we'd come in and start heating up the room, well we'd be tuning drums forever. We edited some of the takes from old versions and then we'd do punch-ins, so it was paramount that the bass and snare sounds didn't change too much. Bruce Flemming was the drummer from Maltese Falcon and he would come in to tune the drums, so that Lars could focus on playing. He ended up being Lars's drum roadie for years, so at least he got something out of it!"

**DID YOU HAVE A FEELING THAT 'RIDE THE LIGHTNING' WAS GOING TO DO BIG THINGS?**
"I definitely thought it was going to be successful. Freddy may never have got it, but I was pretty sure it was going to go big. And it went pretty well for an independent label release. I thought it was absolutely fantastic and was my favourite album at the time. The band weren't hooked up with [major management company] Q Prime at that point. That all came about while we were recording 'Ride The Lightning'. They also had different record companies coming down during the recording, because they were moving on from Megaforce, who'd put out 'Kill 'Em All', and were clearly going to be signing with a major label before long, which ended up being Elektra. So it was kind of obvious that big things were happening for Metallica. When 'Ride The Lightning' came out people went nuts about the guitar and the drum sounds, so that was obviously important in me getting to work on the next record, which turned out to be 'Master Of Puppets', of course."

**GIVEN THE SUCCESS OF 'RIDE THE LIGHTNING', THE 'MASTER OF PUPPETS' PROJECT MUST HAVE BEEN A VERY DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE...**
"It definitely was, mainly because it was obvious that there was more money available. For example, when we started 'Master Of Puppets' I spent two weeks in LA with Lars checking out studios to see if they had anything similar to Sweet Silence. The band had really loved the results we got in the studio on 'Ride The Lightning', but wanted to record the next album in the States because they really wanted to stay there. It was closer to home and I think the management also liked to be close to the band. So everyone felt they'd be more comfortable doing the next record in LA, or at least somewhere in the States. But we just couldn't really find anywhere that had the room we had at Sweet Silence. It wasn't my decision. I was on board either way. But in the end the band decided, 'F*ck it. We'll go to Denmark again.'"

**GIVEN YOUR CLOSE PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT WITH SWEET SILENCE, WOULD IT HAVE BEEN HARDER FOR YOU TO PRODUCE AN ALBUM THAT WASN'T BEING RECORDED IN YOUR STUDIO?**
"Not really. I co-owned Sweet Silence and was the in-house engineer, but I had the freedom to do other

projects. The band would simply have paid Sweet Silence some kind of fee for taking me out of the studio. But in the end it wasn't an issue."

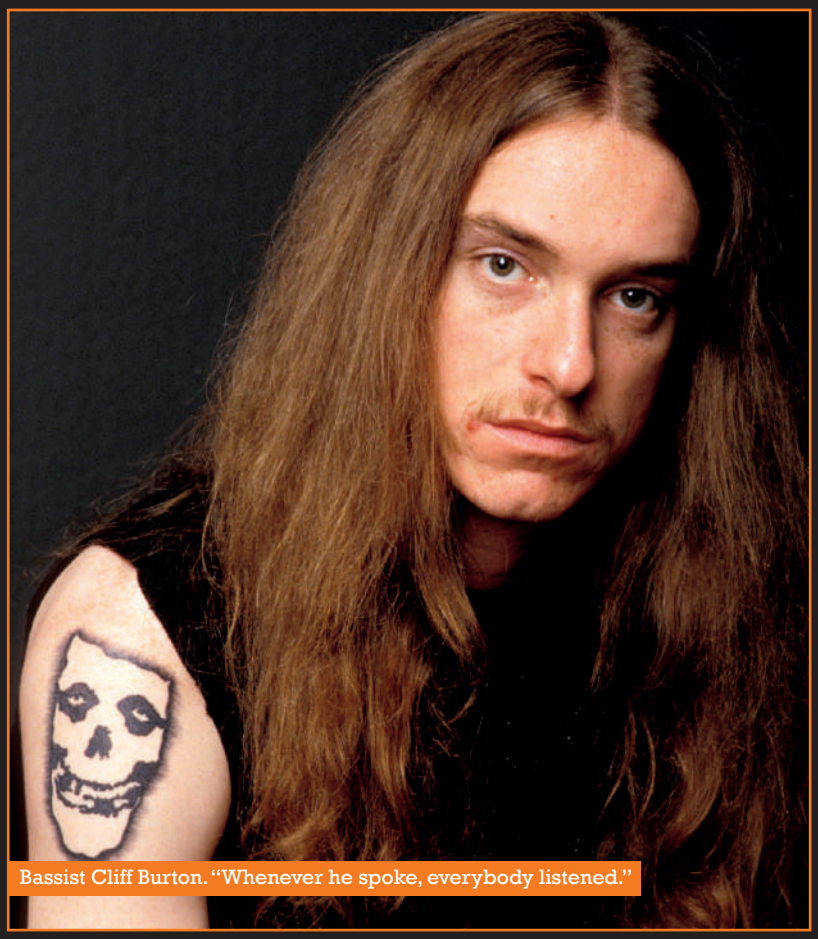
**WHAT WERE THE BIG DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WORKING PRACTICES ON 'RIDE THE LIGHTNING' AND 'MASTER OF PUPPETS'?**

"On a practical level the band had a hotel in Copenhagen for 'Masters...', whereas before they'd stayed at friends' apartments. The guys loved being in a hotel because we always worked a night shift and when they would leave the studio each day at five or six in the morning, they'd go back to the hotel where the breakfast service was just starting. They would totally pig out on that!

"Musically, once again I had no involvement in the pre-production. They prepared everything in Lars's garage back in the States, which was their rehearsal room. Metallica have always done really good demos, so they pretty much had everything nailed when they came to the studio, apart from one or two songs. I do remember that they wrote 'The Thing That Should Not Be' in the studio because they needed another heavy song. But generally they were very well prepared. They really didn't ever go into the studio until they were ready. Rainbow was different. They had a couple of ballads for singles and Ritchie had some half-formed ideas, so they'd jam their way to new songs in the studio. Metallica was always fully prepared. It was more or less all done in terms of vocal sketches and riffs. So what they came in with at the start of 'Master Of Puppets' is pretty much what ended up on the record. The arrangements were more or less there."

**MANY PRODUCERS REALLY PULL SONGS APART AND THEN RECONSTRUCT THEM. THAT WASN'T THE WAY YOU DID 'MASTERS...' THOUGH, RIGHT?**

"That's right. Obviously we talked about changes here and there, but the songs really didn't need much altering. I remember coming up with the backward intro on 'Battery'. That was my idea. But that sort of thing wasn't my role. I was much more about sound and performance, making sure they played well and that I captured the right sounds. I wasn't surprised by their songwriting competence, though. They'd already showed what they could do with songs like 'Creeping Death'."



Bassist Cliff Burton. "Whenever he spoke, everybody listened."

"I'M THREE OR FOUR YEARS OLDER THAN THEM, SO THEY THOUGHT IT WAS FUNNY TO CALL ME DADDY. I WAS THE OLDER GUY WHO COULD MAKE SURE THAT THINGS HAPPENED. BUT THEY WERE ALL PRETTY FOCUSED ON WHAT THEY WERE DOING TOO, SO THINGS WENT WELL."

**WHO WERE THE DRIVING FORCES IN THE BAND THEN?**

"Lars and James were definitely the most musical. But Cliff was one of those people... Whenever he spoke, everybody listened. He was the educated guy in the band, the one with the classical background. He didn't speak all that often, but when he spoke it was pretty much always to say something important. He didn't have the same drive and energy that James and Lars had. He was more relaxed, cooler and more controlled. I think that helped the band's originality, because he wrote stuff that reflected his own unique personality. Cliff was a good counterbalance to Lars's and James's outspoken and loud personalities. Great bands are often based on great chemistry, the vibe between people. With Metallica, it's the interaction between the guys that's interesting, not how well they play their individual instruments. You have supergroups of outstanding players, but most of what they do is kinda boring. A great group doesn't have to have the best players ever."

**WELL, THE CRITICISM HAS BEEN LEVELLED AT LARS FOR MANY YEARS NOW THAT HE ISN'T REALLY THE GREATEST DRUMMER IN THE WORLD...**

"I always thought that was kinda harsh, but I do know why people say that. Lars is a drummer who goes from one fill to another, and he's probably one of the best in the world at doing fills. What goes on in-between never really excited him all that much. Playing 'boom ka, boom ka, boom' for 10 hours isn't all that interesting, so you could say that Lars has a pretty musical way of seeing things. He's a very clever guy generally, but musically in particular. He knows his rock history and that really came out on 'Master Of Puppets'. Kirk would come in with a solo and Lars and I would change it around. Lars had some really good input on that because he's steeped in rock and he kinda sculpted a lot of the solos on the album. The solos started out as a work in progress. Then Kirk would listen to what Lars and I had to say. If he agreed with the suggestions, then that was fine. If not, we'd all work on it until things came together to ►

Photo: Getty Images/Ross Marino; Getty Images/Krasner/Trabitz/Redferns

# EYEWITNESS

DATELINE: FEBRUARY-MARCH 1984 AND SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 1985

everyone's satisfaction. We'd try things out that didn't work and that was fine. What was really clear on 'Master Of Puppets' was that everyone was pulling in the right direction. We all knew that what we were producing was going to be a really good album. We all knew that the songs were really strong. Everybody was totally focused on putting everything into the project so that when it was done we'd all go, 'Yeah, we nailed it!'"

**HOW DIFFICULT WAS THE RECORDING PROCESS OVERALL?**

"Honestly, recording 'Master Of Puppets' was a walk in the park. Everyone was really happy and there was a really good vibe in the studio. Don't get me wrong. It was hard work, but it wasn't difficult in any sense. We all had the same ideas about how it should sound and we were all working hard to get it where it needed to be. There were songs that were more difficult than others, of course, but I can't honestly remember which. Of the three albums I did with Metallica ['Ride The Lightning', 'Master Of Puppets' and '...And Justice For All'], 'Master Of Puppets' was the easiest to record. It was much more like pulling teeth on '...And Justice...', but I think that was because Metallica always set the bar high and sometimes they wanted to achieve things that were beyond what they were capable of doing. But that's a good way to evolve, because then it becomes a matter of hard work and putting the time in and eventually you get there."

Touring in support of 'Master Of Puppets', Hammersmith Odeon, London, 21 September 1986

**SO NO ARGUMENTS?**

"Ah, there were a few arguments, but nothing where things went too far. It's probably better to describe them as 'heated discussions' about what was best for the songs. But that shows passion. It was a good joint venture. We'd try different things and choose what was best."

**WHEN 'MASTER OF PUPPETS' WAS DONE, DID YOU FEEL YOU'D IMPROVED ON 'RIDE THE LIGHTNING'?**

"I did, yes. That was a time in Metallica's career when everything was on the rise. They were selling more and more albums and playing bigger and bigger shows. Everyone was really happy, because it felt like they were conquering the world. I thought 'Master...' was a special record, but I also thought the same about 'Ride The Lightning'. I was really impressed with the songs and the edginess of the band. Weirdly, though, 'Ride The Lightning' didn't get any attention at all in Denmark. Only the metal inner sanctum knew it here, though they loved it. It was only with 'Master...' that the band became really established in Denmark."

**YOU MIXED 'RIDE THE LIGHTNING', BUT NOT 'MASTER OF PUPPETS'. WHY WAS THAT?**

"I was supposed to mix 'Master...', but the album took longer to record than we'd anticipated and I had other sessions to do. We spent four months recording it. I think we started on 1 September 1985 and went on all the way up to Christmas. I seem to remember that the band minus Lars flew back to the States on Christmas morning. Lars stayed on and we did the last drum repairs between Christmas and New Year's Eve, then packed

Photo: IconicPix/George Chin

**METALLICA – 'RIDE THE LIGHTNING'**

**Recorded:** 20 Feb – 14 March 1984
**Released:** 27 July 1984

**LINE UP:**
**JAMES HETFIELD** – vocals, rhythm guitar
**KIRK HAMMETT** – lead guitar, backing vocals
**CLIFF BURTON** – bass, backing vocals
**LARS ULRICH** – drums, percussion, backing vocals

**Produced by** Metallica and Flemming Rasmussen
**Engineered by** Flemming Rasmussen

**Recorded:** Sweet Silence, Copenhagen, Denmark

**TRACK LISTING**
**Fight Fire With Fire** (James Hetfield, Lars Ulrich, Cliff Burton)
**Ride The Lightning** (James Hetfield, Lars Ulrich, Cliff Burton, Dave Mustaine)
**For Whom The Bell Tolls** (James Hetfield, Lars Ulrich, Cliff Burton)
**Fade To Black** (James Hetfield, Lars Ulrich, Cliff Burton, Kirk Hammett)
**Trapped Under Ice** (James Hetfield, Lars Ulrich, Kirk Hammett)
**Escape** (James Hetfield, Lars Ulrich, Kirk Hammett)
**Creeping Death** (James Hetfield, Lars Ulrich, Cliff Burton, Kirk Hammett)
**The Call Of Ktulu** (James Hetfield, Lars Ulrich, Cliff Burton, Dave Mustaine)

up all the tapes and shipped off Lars's drums because the band had a gig on New Year's Eve in San Francisco. So it was really just that we'd run out of time for me to mix. Michael Wagener ended up mixing and he did a great job. And maybe it's better for someone else to mix. When you're producing you always fall in love with certain parts and sometimes you're too close to a particular number to see that maybe a part that you like isn't, in fact, enhancing the song. Maybe the song would be better off without it. But you're too close, because you know what every note, every drum hit, every hi-hat is doing in a song. You need another perspective. So Michael mixing 'Master Of Puppets' was absolutely fine with me."

**THE ALBUM WAS RELEASED IN MARCH OF 1986 AND OF COURSE AS WE KNOW, IT TURNED OUT TO BE THE LAST RECORD TO FEATURE CLIFF. HOW DID HIS DEATH AFFECT YOU?**
"It affected me really badly. It was my mum who phoned me to tell me what had happened and I was just so shocked. I went to see Lars in San Francisco in November of '86, a month or so after the accident. They played a warm-up gig with Metal Church to get [new bassist] Jason [Newsted] going. It was amazing, but it was also really strange not seeing Cliff up there. Jason did a great job, but it definitely changed the dynamic of the band, which meant 'Master Of Puppets' turned out to be a watershed album in many ways."

**MORE THAN 30 YEARS LATER, HOW DO YOU LOOK BACK ON 'MASTER OF PUPPETS' TODAY?**
"I think it's up there in the top three best albums I've ever done. Not only for the sonics and for the quality of the songs themselves, but also because of the significance it had for the band and for so many people around the world. From start to finish it's a fantastic album. It took Metallica into the mainstream for the first time and really started to set up the incredible success that would come further down the line with the 'Black' album. I still get mails from people all over the world saying thank you for what I did on 'Master Of Puppets', which is kinda strange, but really nice all the same. The album really did change rock music, because it took thrash overground."

**HAVE YOU EVER WISHED YOU COULD REMIX IT YOURSELF AND BRING SOMETHING DIFFERENT TO IT AFTER ALL THIS TIME?**
"As it stands it's a perfect picture of a point in time. But I would love to get my hands on the two-inch tapes now and f*ck around with them, for sure. I think that would be really interesting."

**WHAT ARE THE CHANCES OF THAT HAPPENING?**
"We talk on and off and I sometimes write stuff for various Metallica reissues. For example, I talked about the recording process on the 'Ride The Lightning' reissue. We're in constant contact, but I more or less leave things up to the band. I don't want to be the annoying cousin saying, 'Can I? Can I?' I'm pretty sure they know that if they want to remix 'Master Of Puppets', then all they need to do is give me a call and I'll be ready."

> "'MASTER OF PUPPETS' IS IN THE TOP THREE BEST ALBUMS I'VE EVER DONE. NOT ONLY FOR THE SONICS AND THE QUALITY OF THE SONGS, BUT ALSO BECAUSE OF THE SIGNIFICANCE IT HAD FOR THE BAND AND FOR SO MANY PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD. FROM START TO FINISH IT'S A FANTASTIC ALBUM."

**WHAT DO YOU THINK OF METALLICA IN 2020 IN COMPARISON TO METALLICA IN 1985?**
"I heard the last album [2016's 'Hardwired... To Self-Destruct'] and said to Lars that I would have really, really enjoyed producing those songs. He told me that was the best critique of the record he could possibly have asked for."

**AND FINALLY FLEMMING... YOU KNOW THAT 'MASTER OF PUPPETS' HAS BEEN ADDED TO THE NATIONAL RECORDING REGISTRY OF THE U.S. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, WHICH IS THERE TO HIGHLIGHT THE RICHNESS OF THE NATION'S AUDIO LEGACY. THAT'S QUITE AN HONOUR. COULD YOU EVER HAVE IMAGINED THAT WOULD HAPPEN WHILE YOU WERE RECORDING THE ALBUM ALL THOSE YEARS AGO?**
"Absolutely not, but as you say it's a huge honour. When it was first announced in 2016 I posted a lot of stuff about it on Facebook because I was so proud. It's great that so many different people and so many different places recognise 'Master Of Puppets' as one of the best metal albums of all time. And I'm very, very proud to have played my part in its creation."

**METALLICA – 'MASTER OF PUPPETS'**

**Recorded:** 1 Sept – 27 Dec 1985
**Released:** 3 March 1986

**LINE UP:**
**JAMES HETFIELD** – vocals, rhythm guitar
**KIRK HAMMETT** – lead guitar, backing vocals
**CLIFF BURTON** – bass, backing vocals
**LARS ULRICH** – drums, percussion, backing vocals

**Produced by** Flemming Rasmussen and Metallica
**Engineered by** Flemming Rasmussen, assisted by Andy Wroblewski
**Mixed by** Michael Wagener
**Recorded:** Sweet Silence, Copenhagen, Denmark

**TRACK LISTING**
**Battery** (James Hetfield, Lars Ulrich)
**Master Of Puppets** (James Hetfield, Lars Ulrich, Cliff Burton, Kirk Hammett)
**The Thing That Should Not Be** (James Hetfield, Lars Ulrich, Kirk Hammett)
**Welcome Home (Sanitarium)** (James Hetfield, Lars Ulrich, Kirk Hammett)
**Disposable Heroes** (James Hetfield, Lars Ulrich, Kirk Hammett)
**Leper Messiah** (James Hetfield, Lars Ulrich)
**Orion** (James Hetfield, Lars Ulrich, Cliff Burton)
**Damage Inc.** (James Hetfield, Lars Ulrich, Cliff Burton, Kirk Hammett)

# SAGA

Photo: IconicPix/MM Media

# A VERY LONG SAGA

Pomp rockers **Saga** have been ploughing their own unique furrow for more than 40 years. Canadian rock specialist *Paul Suter* has followed them since their earliest days and talks to bassist **Jim Crichton** and drummer **Steve Negus** about the long and winding road they've taken...

**THE WORD 'UNIQUE' TENDS** to get overused when we're talking about bands, but Saga truly sounded like nobody else, and nobody else sounded like Saga. And while that individuality may have made their path to the very top a rocky and ultimately impassable road, it also served to sustain them over an unbroken 40-year career, which is something few bands manage to achieve.

The Saga story begins with a band called Truck. The group, featuring bassist Jim Crichton, suddenly found themselves needing a frontman when they literally threw their singer off the bus on their way home from a show, then remembered they had another gig the next day.

Jim recalls first encountering Michael Sadler when Truck and his friends in Rush – Crichton and Rush guitarist Alex Lifeson had been in a teenage band together – found themselves opening an outdoor show for a band they'd never heard of. This act not only projected images onto a huge balloon floating over the stage, but also featured a bass player who came onstage as Hitler, then transformed into The Pope among others. Yet it was the band's frontman who held everybody's attention. Truck gave the singer, Michael Sadler, a call and their next show went ahead as planned. But it wasn't long before Jim was invited to replace Doni Underhill in a group called Fludd, and it wasn't a difficult decision for him to make.

"It was like being in Canada's answer to The Beatles," says Crichton. "Two guys from Birmingham with British accents [brothers Brian and Ed Pilling] and hit singles under their belt. It was amazing to suddenly be in front of huge crowds singing along with all the songs."

Fludd may have been a commercially successful band a million miles away from Jim's previous work, but it nevertheless played a vital part in the gestation of Saga because Fludd's final line-up also included original Saga members, keyboard player Peter Rochon and drummer Steve Negus. When Brian Pilling's leukaemia brought Fludd to an end – he would pass away at the age of just 29 – Jim started to work on new tunes. His first call was to Michael Sadler. "Michael simply had my favourite voice of anyone I'd ever worked with," he says.

Although primarily a bassist Jim is also an adept keyboard player and has always had a fascination with finding new sounds. Synthesizers were in their infancy at that time and were only capable of playing a single note at a time. All the same, though, they opened up a whole new vista for Jim. He ended up breaking three note chords into their individual notes, recording the first note for the entire song, then the second, then the third, and finally combining the results.

"I had a recording that sounded like a polyphonic synthesizer," he explains. "But of course there wasn't an instrument to play it on until Moog came out with the Polymoog and saved my butt. At the time I didn't have a clue how I was going to be able to play the tunes. I just wanted to hear them."

**JIM AND** Michael worked up several more numbers before deciding it was time to start playing them live as best they could with the available technology. That meant putting a band together. Jim's guitarist brother Ian had been covering Led Zeppelin and Trapeze numbers in a band called Kickback and delivered a heavy counterpoint to the keyboards on which the songs had been built. A couple of calls later the band was completed with the recruitment of Jim's former Fludd bandmates Steve Negus and Peter Rochon.

Negus came from a background playing funk and R&B, though he'd also served time in a heavy rock band named Fullerton Dam. His playing style helped set Saga apart from other keyboard-dominated bands of the time.

"Listen to 'Humble Stance' for example," Negus notes. "That's a funk groove. Peter Rochon and I were the funk guys, Michael and Jim were more prog, and we'd kinda duke it out in rehearsals to see what would happen. Ian floated between us."

The band originally started working as Pockets. Mercifully that name was already taken by another outfit, which enforced a change to Saga. The group borrowed five grand and shut themselves in a warehouse, rehearsing and refining their sound for six months, before a debut show at The Tudor Tavern in Cambridge, 60 miles outside of their Toronto hometown, on 13 June 1977.

Saga stuck out like a sore thumb and didn't initially set the scene on fire, though they did get up the noses of a few club owners at the time.

"We had so many keyboards," Jim recalls with a smile. "We'd turn up at venues early in the morning ►

with tools and planks of wood and build stage extensions just so we could get all the equipment up there. The owners weren't at all happy."

Keyboards were such a Saga thing that Moog even came to see the band to offer them a deal. "We said, 'We've already got two of everything you make. What else can you possibly do for us?'" laughs Jim.

The band kept working while they refined that initial batch of songs. The next step was to record them. Luckily, a former bandmate of Peter Rochon's happened to be the co-owner of Toronto's top studio at the time, Phase One.

Saga hard at work in the studio in the late '70s with vocalist Michael Sadler modelling his much-missed walrus moustache

"I HAD A RECORDING THAT SOUNDED LIKE A POLYPHONIC SYNTHESIZER, BUT THERE WASN'T AN INSTRUMENT TO PLAY IT ON UNTIL MOOG CAME OUT WITH THE POLYMOOG AND SAVED MY BUTT. I DIDN'T HAVE A CLUE HOW I WAS GOING TO PLAY THE TUNES. I JUST WANTED TO HEAR THEM."
**JIM CRICHTON**

**PAUL GROSS** would work with the band on their first three albums, 1978's 'Saga', 'Images At Twilight' from 1979, and 1980's 'Silent Knight'. At first the band didn't have the budget to record at the best studio in the city. Fortunately, Gross allocated them studio downtime to lay down what was originally intended to be a demo, but gradually morphed into a debut album. Not having any debt hanging over their heads put the band into a better bargaining position than most when it came to seeking a deal.

It was at this point that manager Clive Corcoran came into the picture. There was a dearth of quality managers in Canada at the time, but former radio exec Corcoran proved to be a sharp businessman who played a significant part in Saga's rise, though he would also bear at least some responsibility for subsequent problems. Introduced to the band by Truck's drummer Marty Morin – once a roommate – Corcoran concluded a deal with Polygram in Canada for the band to retain ownership of their albums and to licence them to the label. Saga owned the masters and the label didn't have to come up with a recording budget, which meant that everybody won. And Saga had something that was very rare – complete artistic freedom. "None of the labels were ever able to dictate," explains Steve Negus. Different labels would later come and go, but with the exception of the deal struck for 1987's 'Wildest Dreams', Saga have funded their own recordings and own every one of their albums.

**THE EPONYMOUS** debut LP was released in June 1978 and went largely unnoticed in Canada where it was hard enough for any domestic band to get airplay, let alone one as leftfield as Saga. But, as Jim recalls, "The album started generating a buzz in Germany as an import. Stores started ordering directly from Canada and were taking five or six thousand copies. The Canadian label must have spoken to the German company about us, and Polydor signed us over there." The album went on to sell some 35,000 copies in Germany, opening the door to a country that would become the bedrock of Saga's entire career. The album also featured the first pair of 'Chapters' in the band's song titles, one of Jim's brainwaves for making Saga stand out from their contemporaries.

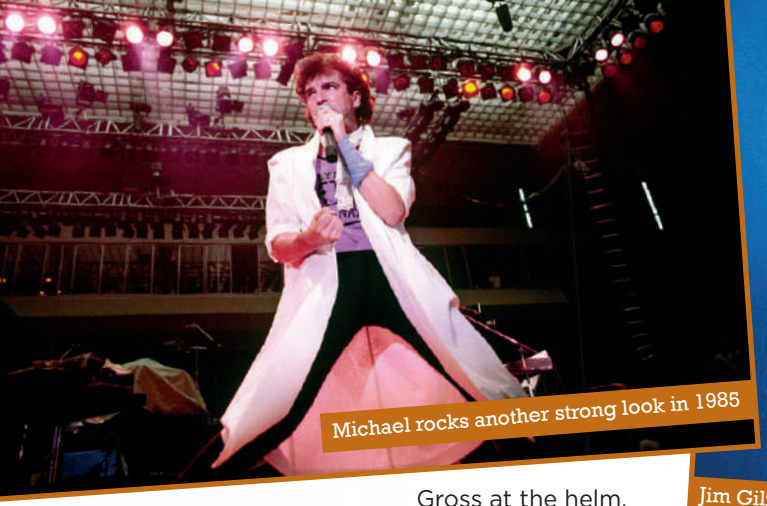
"It became an interesting twist," he says. "The first album comes out with songs that have 'Chapter Four' and 'Chapter Six' in their titles and you're in the middle of some deranged story. It made for something else for people to talk about with this new band. Our songs tended to start as musical sketches and sometimes I'd hear one and think 'that sounds like a chapter.' Then I'd have to look at my notes and figure out which chapter might fit the tune."

Germany was good to Saga from the off. But there was another country that supported the band from the get-go too. That country was Puerto Rico! A local DJ who was on holiday in Canada heard the Saga album playing in a store as he was walking by. He went in and bought it, took the album home and started playing Saga on the radio. In no time at all Saga were huge in Puerto Rico.

Despite these pockets of success keyboard player Peter Rochon quit the band before they began recording second album 'Images At Twilight.' The split was amicable. Rochon simply felt that financial security was more important to him than uncertain possibilities of future success.

Rochon was replaced by Greg Chadd, who left the band before work was even completed on 'Images At Twilight'. The album was again recorded at Phase One with Paul

Photos: Getty Images/Colin McConnell/Toronto Star; IconicPix/PG Brunelli; Getty Images/P Brookes/Mirrorpix



Michael rocks another strong look in 1985

Jim Gilmour onstage. Is that a keytar rising out of the mist?

Gross at the helm, with most of Chadd's keyboard parts replaced by Jim Crichton and Michael Sadler.

**RELEASED IN 1979,** 'Images At Twilight' would yield a minor hit in Canada with 'It's Time (Chapter Three)'. The band toured there for two months, but Europe was calling and in June of 1980 Saga headed there to open for Styx, with new recruit Jim Gilmour on keyboards. Given the fact that there was already a Jim in the band, Gilmour rapidly became known as 'Daryl' thanks to his resemblance to Toronto Maple Leafs' ice hockey captain Darryl Sittler.

Saga was developing a better understanding of what worked and what didn't, and a third album, 1980's 'Silent Knight', did a good job of encapsulating the band's sound. It also featured a future classic, 'Don't Be Late (Chapter Two)'. Nevertheless, Jim Crichton maintains that they weren't writing for anybody but themselves.

"We didn't have anybody in mind, we just made the record. But all the energy was in Germany so that's where we were playing." The band also started to attract American attention thanks to one of Corcoran's forward-thinking managerial moves.

"Clive decided we should make videos," Jim recalls. "We didn't really understand why, but there was this thing in America called MTV that had started and didn't have enough videos to fill their day. Suddenly they were playing 'Don't Be Late' and 'Careful Where You Step' and we were getting all this exposure for an album that wasn't even released in the States. That got [US record label] Portrait's attention, a couple of guys flew out from New York to see us play in Germany, and they signed us."

> "MICHAEL WAS A CLOSET DRINKER. WE DIDN'T REALISE HE HAD A PROBLEM UNTIL HE TRIED TO STOP AND HIS BODY STARTED SHUTTING DOWN. BUT HE WOULD ALWAYS TURN UP AND PERFORM. HE DID EVERYTHING THAT WAS EXPECTED OF HIM."
> **STEVE NEGUS**

**ESCALATING SUCCESS** in Germany meant that Polydor advanced more money to the band, plus Portrait would now be adding to the pot, which funded a relocation to England. It was close enough to Germany, and English was spoken there. There was six months of intensive writing and rehearsing before recording even started. But leaving Canada also meant leaving Paul Gross behind and searching for a new producer.

"We were introduced to Rupert Hine," Jim remembers. "We played his albums and I had no idea how he'd made them. He had some incredibly innovative recording techniques. We were very excited to record with him and see how he worked."

'Worlds Apart', released in the autumn of 1981, would prove to be a huge success everywhere. There had been hints of what was to come on 'Silent Knight', but the new album was a huge yet organic step forward. Finally Saga were ready for America. The album spawned two singles that hit the US *Billboard* Hot 100, 'Wind Him Up' and 'On The Loose', both supported by video airplay from the band's new friends at MTV. A heavy touring schedule saw Saga opening for a variety of acts including Pat Benatar and Billy Squier. The album eventually went gold in the US, as it already had in Canada and Germany.

The band was awarded a Juno (the Canadian equivalent of the Grammys) in 1982 as 'Most Promising Group of 1981' and played a few Canadian shows. But most of that year was devoted to European touring and recording the world's first digital live album by a rock band, 'In Transit', released in August 1982. Like much in their history Saga opted to do things differently on the road. Instead of putting microphones in front of a traditional backline of amps, all of the band's instruments bar the guitar fed directly into the mixing board.

"I don't think I've had an amp since 1979," laughs Crichton. "In our first year we realised that we had more bass things going on than most bands – two keyboard players playing left hand parts because Michael Sadler contributed additional keyboards; a bass player with a bass, bass pedals and a Moog; and a drummer with two bass drums. Getting that spectrum of sound to work correctly was tricky. Amps tend to project differently. So one day we went to a music store and bought a bunch of floor wedges to use. Ian was the only one with an amp and everything else was plugged straight into the board. The first night we did that I'd never seen a happier soundman in my life. He could control everything."

**ALL WAS** looking good in Saga world and the band's next studio album, 1983's 'Heads Or Tales', was certainly as strong as 'Worlds Apart'. Some might argue that it was better. Nevertheless, sales-wise it would fall

significantly short of its predecessor in the US, and as it transpired Saga had already achieved their biggest commercial success just five years into their career.

Again produced by Rupert Hine, 'Heads Or Tales' and its first single 'The Flyer' both managed to crack the US *Billboard* Top 100. But that was as far as things went, and any hopes of building US sales with live work were thwarted by a dearth of touring opportunities.

"I think 'Heads Or Tales' was just as strong an album as 'Worlds Apart'," notes Negus. "Up till then we were headed up... and then we weren't."

The band was still very successful in Germany, was doing well across Europe, and was opening up new markets behind the slowly crumbling Iron Curtain. That might have been financially worthless, since you couldn't take any money out of Iron Curtain countries, but Saga saw it as an investment in the future. Plus they not only had Puerto Rico, but also Venezuela now. Yet Saga's commitment to pouring money into memorable live shows meant they were spending a huge percentage of their income, and living in England was costing money too. It didn't help, either, that financial planning had been predicated on 'Heads Or Tales' doing at least as well as its predecessor. Manager Clive Corcoran, meanwhile, was building increasingly byzantine business structures, leading to some frustration. Jim takes a philosophical view of the way the band's business was handled, and admits that, "We weren't overly concerned about money and getting rich. Nothing really mattered as long as the bills got paid and we could afford to put on the show we wanted to give the fans. And let's face it, in the '80s 'creative accounting' was pretty much the rule rather than the exception. Apart from Rush, who were actually friends with [their manager] Ray Danniels, I can't think of any band that was totally thrilled with their accounting."

> "WE HAD A STAGE SHOW WITH A LIGHTWALL AND MOVING LIGHTS. SOME OF THE CANADIAN PROMOTERS WERE SAYING, 'YOU CAN'T DO THAT HERE, THE SHOW'S TOO BIG.' WE DIDN'T PLAY CANADA FOR 10 YEARS. IT WAS A BUMMER NOT TO BE PLAYING IN OUR HOME COUNTRY."
> **JIM CRICHTON**

**SAGA'S NEXT** album, 1985's 'Behaviour', was a clear attempt to restore the band's US profile with more radio-friendly tunes, which in the end failed to reverse the downward trend and additionally made a big hole in the group's accounts. Corcoran had moved Saga to the Bahamas to avoid British taxes, an expensive move in itself, and the spending was compounded by three separate attempts to record the album in Nassau, Zurich, and Munich. Since the band could no longer set foot in England, working with Rupert Hine was no longer an option, and the album was co-produced by Saga with engineer Peter Walsh.

'Behaviour' may have been crafted with America in mind, but bizarrely Saga didn't perform in North America at all, spending all their touring energy in Europe where the album made the Top 10 in several countries. Behind the scenes, though, things were deteriorating, both financially and personally.

"Someone from the management office told me that they were going to get rid of me and Daryl at the end of the tour," reveals Negus. "We did the whole tour knowing we were going to be fired. Clive Corcoran had put the idea into the band's head that since revenues were down they should get rid of the pair of us."

"Nothing's ever that simple," says Crichton by way of response.

Yet given that 'Behaviour' hadn't done any worse than 'Heads Or Tales' in America, Saga decided to double down and make an even more American album, 1987's 'Wildest Dreams'.

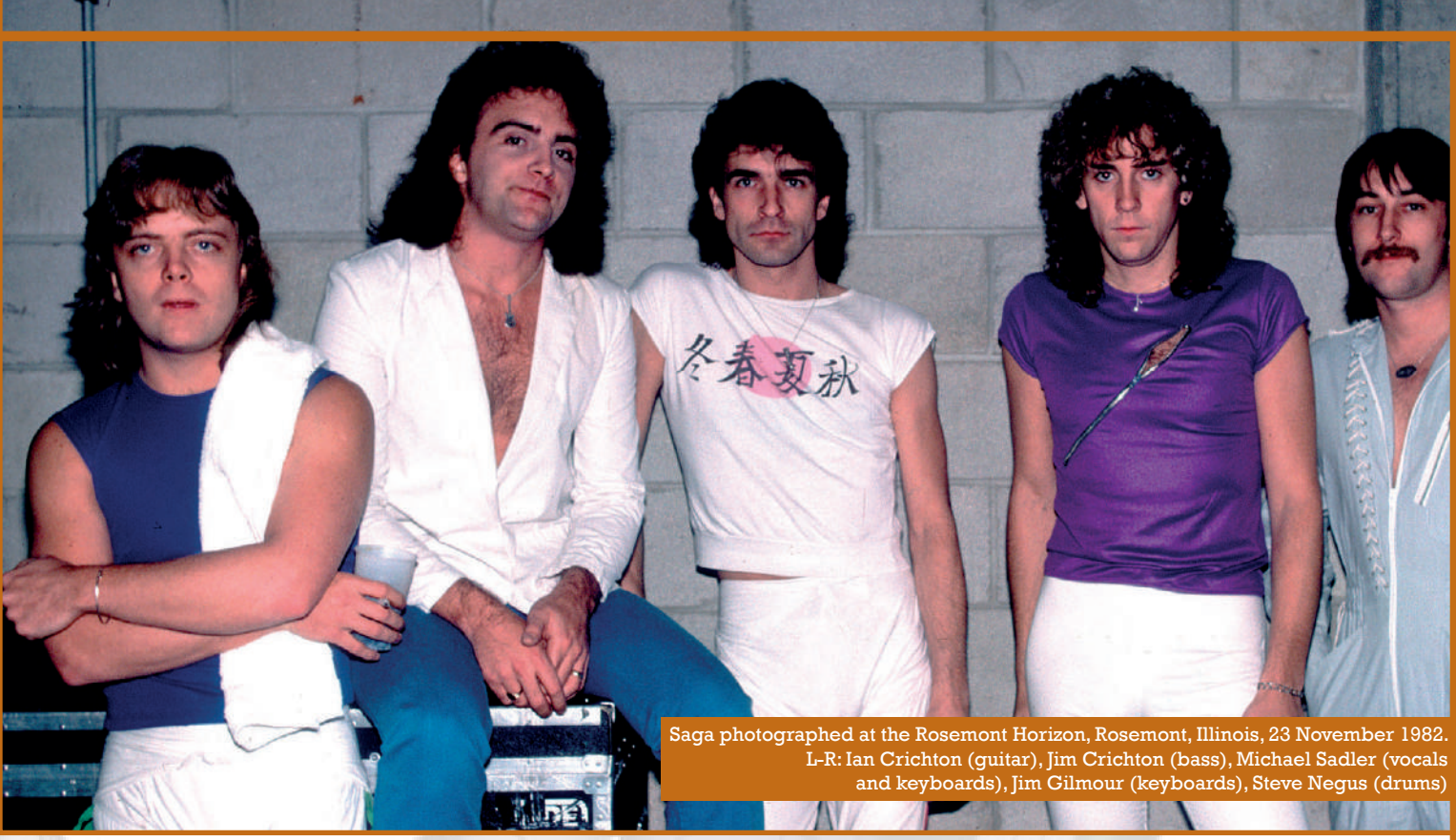
"That was the idea," admits Jim. "I remember talking to David Foster about producing, but we couldn't get our schedules to align. Clive then found Keith Olsen for us. Keith had a connection with Atlantic Records and introduced us to them while we were making the record."

**THE RESULT,** with Jim and Michael handling keyboards and German sessioneer Curt Cress on drums, appeared on Atlantic and was a classic late-'80s AOR album. In places it was outstanding, but it had precious little in common with the Saga sound their fans expected. 'Wildest Dreams' did nothing in the US market it had been aimed at. In Europe – where Corcoran had separated the band from Polydor to release the album on his newly established Bonaire Records – Saga's fans were disappointed with the direction the band had taken. While the album charted in a number of countries, it still fell well below the level of its predecessors.

Touring was another matter, though. One or two disappointing albums weren't helping, but the band was still hugely popular. With Trevor Morrell (of Wham! fame) on drums and Tim Moore (who'd worked with Bros) on keyboards, Saga headed out for another successful bout on the road after an enforced six-month hiatus while Ian Crichton recovered from a badly broken arm suffered in a Los Angeles mugging. Again, their native Canada wasn't on the schedule.

"We had a stageshow with a lightwall and moving lights," remembers Jim. "Some of the Canadian promoters were saying, 'Sorry, you can't do that here, the show's too big.' We didn't play Canada for something like 10 years. We wanted to give the fans the show we'd developed and there were plenty of other countries where we could do it. It was a bummer not to be playing in our home country, but tell us to bring half our show and we just won't do it."

The subsequent album, 1989's 'The Beginner's Guide To Throwing Shapes', was produced by the band and again featured Curt Cress on drums. But the way it sounded effectively acknowledged that making a pure AOR album wasn't what anybody wanted or expected from Saga, and the band leant back toward what they did best. The album also highlighted Ian Crichton's guitar work. Saga might not have provided a traditional context for a guitar hero, which means few but the cognoscenti have ever



Saga photographed at the Rosemont Horizon, Rosemont, Illinois, 23 November 1982. L-R: Ian Crichton (guitar), Jim Crichton (bass), Michael Sadler (vocals and keyboards), Jim Gilmour (keyboards), Steve Negus (drums)

grasped what a ridiculously talented player Crichton is. But alongside 'Heads Or Tales', 'The Beginner's Guide To Throwing Shapes' is probably his finest outing.

**BY NOW** the band was committed to releasing on Bonaire worldwide and Corcoran had arranged a distribution deal via BMG, a label with a dismal track record for rock. The band's US fortunes didn't improve and even in Europe 'The Beginner's Guide...' failed to chart. Once again Saga toured with sidemen, this time the Santana duo of Richard Baker on keyboards and Graham Lear on drums. As usual the touring was a success, but much was happening behind the scenes. Before being ousted from the band Steve Negus had voiced concerns over Corcoran's management. The band finally decided these views had not been entirely misplaced and tour manager Michael Ellis was promoted into Corcoran's place. "Out of the frying pan into the fire," notes Negus.

Meanwhile Jim Crichton and Keith Olsen had developed a professional rapport, leading to Jim opening his own recording studio next door to Keith's, which gave Saga significantly more control over recording costs.

"It wasn't too hard to talk the guys into recording in LA," says Crichton. "It was a nice environment and I think they enjoyed being there. And it was certainly cheaper than using other studios... like the one next door!"

While away from Saga, Steve Negus and Jim Gilmour had formed their own band, GNP. The group signed to Virgin and released a debut album, 'Safety Zone', in 1989, but failed to make much headway. Then Jim Gilmour went to see Saga play in Munich. He'd bought his ticket and had no intentions of going backstage. But a chance meeting opened lines of communication that ultimately led to the duo being invited back into the fold. Following a short celebratory tour of Europe the reunited Saga recorded 'The Security Of Illusion' in 1993. Recorded at Jim Crichton's Sound Image Studios it was Saga's best record since 'Heads Or Tales'.

"It felt really good," notes Crichton. "You can tell we were enjoying making it."

**ALTHOUGH HE** was no longer managing the band, Clive Corcoran's Bonaire label still held US rights, but in Europe Saga were able to revive their relationship with Polydor and get back onto the charts. The changing times meant they could no longer aspire to the Top Five positions of their most successful years, though. Instead it was all about touring and giving fans what they wanted.

"There would occasionally be discussions about why we weren't playing big shows in America," Jim recalls. "But we had our hands full playing Europe. We worked hard at making sure that was always there for us. We always rented the best PA we could get our hands on and the best lighting, even if it cost most of the money we were likely to make."

Musically things seemed to be back on track when out of the blue the band received an offer that could potentially open up the doors to renewed US success. They were asked to soundtrack a new US TV series *Cobra*, created by the hugely successful producer Stephen Cannell. Saga being Saga wasn't going to work for this, but the opportunity to secure weekly TV exposure on a hit show was too big an opportunity to turn down.

"Genesis had pulled a huge twist to their sound and had succeeded," notes Jim Crichton. "We thought maybe we could do the same, but we didn't get away with it. When we toured the record [1994's 'Steel Umbrellas'] there were a couple of songs that actually got the occasional boo. Our audience had always been good to us, but there were some who didn't like that record at all."

"Stephen Cannell had had a huge number of successes," adds Negus. "And if they'd been more sensitive to what Saga was about then it might have worked for us. But it didn't."

**ALL THE** same, Negus has nothing but praise for the ensuing album, 1995's 'Generation 13'. It was a weighty concept effort based on Neil Howe and William Strauss's book *13th Gen: Abort, Retry, Ignore, Fail?*.

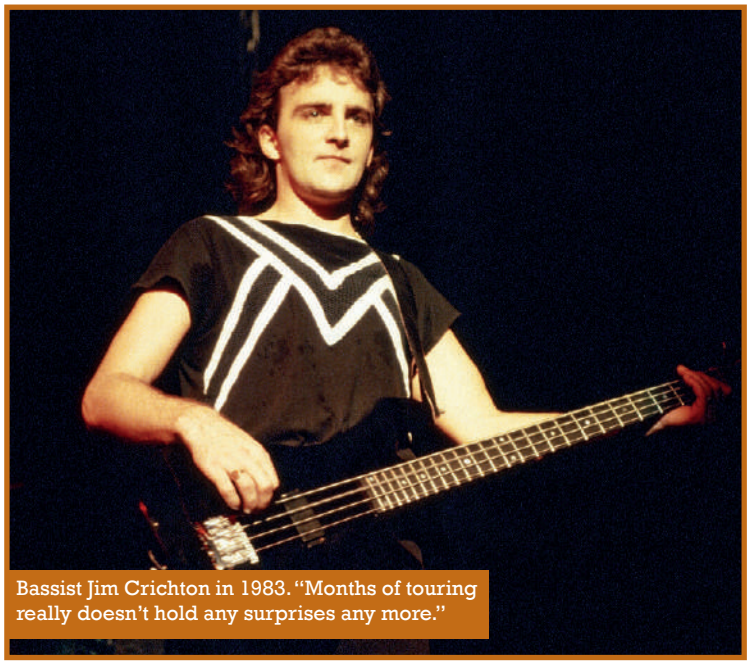
"I loved that record," he says. "A really dark concept album. The creative juices were back and it was Saga being Saga, pushing the envelope and not giving a ►

Photo: Getty Images/Paul Natkin

thought to what was commercially viable. We'd tried to be commercial with 'Steel Umbrellas' and the fans were like, 'What's this? It's not Saga.'"

"In the end we just wanted to make a really cool record," agrees Jim. "Grunge was in full swing and we weren't going to fit in, so we just concentrated on making something creative. It was the kind of record you just keep working on..."

Despite its shortcomings 'Steel Umbrellas' had restored Saga to the German charts, but Polydor were thoroughly bemused by 'Generation 13' and it barely charted in Europe. Both Jim Gilmour and Ian Crichton took time out for solo albums, before 1997's 'Pleasure And The Pain' was written and recorded in just five weeks to coincide with their 20th anniversary tour. Everything happened so quickly that Steve Negus wasn't available and LA session drummer Glen Sobel had to be called in to lay down the drum tracks. The album was a reaction to the musical environment at the time, heavier and rougher than anything the band had done before – "a pulling our hair out, 'how do we fit into this world?' episode," laughs Crichton. But it would do no better than its predecessor. The band had one option left, simply to do what they do best and be themselves, starting with the deliberately named 'Full Circle' in 1999.



Bassist Jim Crichton in 1983. "Months of touring really doesn't hold any surprises any more."

"It was going back to the beginning as much as we could," explains Jim. "It was a different musical environment by then, but we were trying to be as faithful as we could to where we'd started. It was a fun record, everybody was into it."

**THE REVITALISATION** even inaugurated a new set of Chapters that would be scattered across the next three albums – 'Full Circle', 2001's 'House Of Cards' and 2003's 'Marathon'. This run of releases saw a substantial improvement in Saga's chart performances in Germany, despite the fact that Polydor was no longer supporting the band and albums were now being released by one of Germany's larger indies, Steamhammer. But on the flip side of the coin the record-tour-record-tour cycle was starting to wear on the group.

"Compared to things I've heard and read about other bands, Saga lasted 40 years with minimal drama," says Crichton. "Sure there were tough times, but overall everybody got high scores for attempting to respect each other, even when we were exhausted and beat up."

It's been documented in the past that frontman Michael Sadler developed a drinking problem during this period and took a trip to rehab in 2002, although for some time even the other band members were unaware of this.

"Michael was a closet drinker," explains Negus. "We didn't realise he had a problem until he tried to stop and his body started shutting down. But he would always turn up and perform. He did everything that was expected of him."

Negus himself, meanwhile, was growing increasingly disillusioned and would ultimately announce that he'd be quitting the band at the end of the 'Marathon' tour, an open letter posted on his website citing "external circumstances which seem to be beyond my control." His doubts about the band's management had certainly not abated and he was also finding himself unhappy with the recording situation.

"I would go to LA for a week or so, put in 16-hour days in the studio and then fall over in my hotel room. It wasn't a great creative process. That's not how I do my best work. I need time to try things out, do some experimenting to get the right stuff onto the album. Add to that the management situation... So many factors painted a picture that just wasn't pleasant any more."

**NEGUS WAS** replaced by Christian Simpson for 2004's 'Network' album. The theme of Saga just being Saga continued, with no more attempts to fit in with any particular scene at any particular time, and diminishing record sales were accepted as just the way things were, and would continue to be.

"It had become a case of consistently selling less," admits Jim. "Everybody was downloading by now and record sales just weren't what they used to be. We were still charting in Europe, but the numbers were much smaller. Like so many other bands it was a case of going out on tour and hoping you'd make enough money to pay the bills and buy a few sandwiches."

Drummer Christian Simpson was forced to quit due to a neurological condition, and former Helix drummer Brian Doerner was drafted in, first appearing on the 'Trust' album in 2006. The record had to be completed in the face of looming deadlines, resulting in Jim Crichton and Michael Sadler still finishing vocals in LA while the mix had already started in Toronto. Though the songs were indisputably there, the final result was necessarily rushed and not as strong as it might have been, not least because the band's new manager Geoff Kent (who'd previously worked as Saga's live soundman) decided to remix some of the material with nobody else around.

Nevertheless 'Trust' was well received and subsequent touring even included a brief return to the United States

where the band's new European label Inside Out had a small distribution subsidiary. "We probably sold about eight copies," laughs Jim. The tour also briefly featured Steve Negus after Doerner hurt his back. His return was something of a highlight for fans who saw the shows as it proved to be Negus's last involvement with the band.

**2007 BEGAN** with a big shock when Saga frontman Michael Sadler announced that he was leaving. The continuing hamster wheel created by Saga's need to keep working to keep the money coming in had tired the singer, who was anxious to get some breathing space. Sadler wanted to spend some quality time at home without another deadline looming.

What appeared to be Michael's last work with the band was 2007's '10,000 Days' album, its name an approximation of just how long the singer had been in the group. It proved to be another good example of Saga being Saga and would feature an instrumental enigmatically entitled 'Corkentellis.' If you stop and think a little about the names of the band's three managers – Corcoran, Kent, and Ellis – then you'll be able to figure out what the song is about. Prudently it's an instrumental, but the track starts with sounds, as Jim notes with a smile, "not unlike somebody getting punched..."

Performing in Hamburg, Germany, June 1980. The band had so much equipment in their early days that they would frequently build extra bits of stage to accommodate it.

"COMPARED TO THINGS I'VE HEARD AND READ ABOUT OTHER BANDS, SAGA LASTED 40 YEARS WITH MINIMAL DRAMA. SURE THERE WERE TOUGH TIMES, BUT OVERALL EVERYBODY GOT HIGH SCORES FOR ATTEMPTING TO RESPECT EACH OTHER, EVEN WHEN WE WERE EXHAUSTED AND BEAT UP."
**JIM CRICHTON**

Given that Michael Sadler's voice had always been such a big part of the Saga sound many fans were concerned that this would be the end of the band. Crichton, however, was determined to continue.

"We tried six or seven people and in the end everyone felt that Rob Moratti came the closest to being able to pull it off," explains Jim. "Although there was a girl from Finland who was amazing, very creative and totally cool too. It was rather tempting. You can't just replace Michael, so maybe do something completely different... In the end I guess we just didn't have the courage."

Inevitably 2009's 'The Human Condition' sounded different with a new vocalist, although it was still clearly Saga. The question was how well Moratti, recruited from Canadian hard rock band Final Frontier, would work out on the road. Results were mixed, as Jim notes.

"For any band that's had an outstanding frontman the change is pretty rough – and it's even worse for the new guy. Michael knew how to control a crowd and the audiences loved him, so Rob had these huge hurdles to deal with. He did his best and the fans were respectful, but he had such big shoes to fill."

Which is perhaps a nice way to say that Jim was pretty pleased eventually to hear from Michael, who was starting to get restless at home. He stepped back into the band early in the process of writing and recording 2012's '20/20', which would see Saga reach number 13 in Germany, the best chart position since 'Behaviour' some 27 years earlier. They took their time over the album, recording it over the course of a year in between tour dates celebrating Sadler's return. Not only did the record bear more of a resemblance to the successful, exuberant Rupert Hine-era albums, but Sadler's return also revitalised the band's fanbase.

'20/20' featured the last appearance of drummer Brian Doerner, who'd previously been sidelined from most of the '10,000 Days' tour after a heart attack. Chris Sutherland from Kim Mitchell's band had filled in for him. Doerner was replaced by Mike Thorne, before Saga headed out onto the road again.

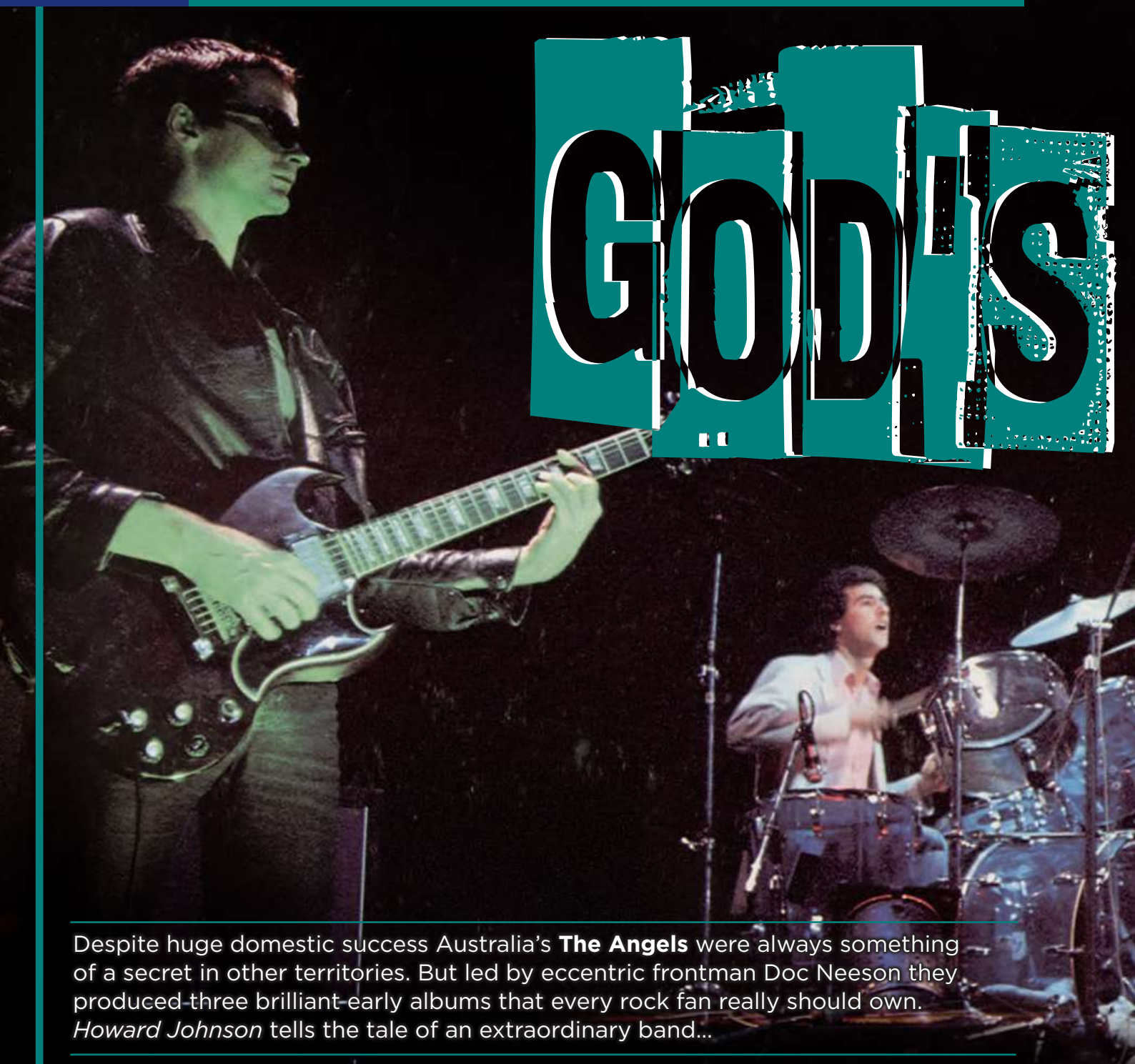
**2014 MARKED** the release of 'Sagacity', which came close to matching the chart performance of its predecessor. The album was followed by the inevitable return to the road, with two-to-four month blocks of dates extending into 2017 before the unexpected announcement was made that with 40 years under their belt, Saga was drawing a line under their career.

"There wasn't a decision at the time that 'Sagacity' would be our last album," Jim notes. "But after touring... there was something about 40 years perhaps being enough. At that stage of my life I wanted to do something that would surprise me, and months of touring really doesn't hold any surprises any more."

And that would have been the end of that, but for the fact that it became apparent that Saga's fans demanded more Saga, meaning that there was still profitable work to be done. Saga is back playing live again. True to his word Jim Crichton is staying home trying to surprise himself, with Dusty Chesterfield taking his place on the road. But at least one of his surprises involves expanding on a project previewed on the band's 'Final Chapter' tour in 2017, where he and his bandmates re-imagine old Saga tunes on new instruments, with not a single synth, electric guitar or drum kit allowed. If that happens it's going to be fascinating to hear. The Saga saga hasn't quite reached its final page yet...

Photo: Getty Images/P Brookes/Mirrorpix; Getty Images/Jazz Archiv Hamburg/Ullstein Bild

# GODS



Despite huge domestic success Australia's **The Angels** were always something of a secret in other territories. But led by eccentric frontman Doc Neeson they produced three brilliant early albums that every rock fan really should own. *Howard Johnson* tells the tale of an extraordinary band...

**IT'S UNDERSTANDABLE THAT AC/DC** cast a long, long shadow over the Australian rock business. No Aussie group playing hard and heavy has ever come close to matching their sustained worldwide success. Cold Chisel, Midnight Oil, The Screaming Jets, Baby Animals and Rose Tattoo all had their moments musically. But none of these acts ever broke the industry glass ceiling the way Malcolm and Angus Young's band did. Yet in my view the only Aussie act that truly deserved to follow in AC/DC's commercially successful footsteps was The Angels.

Fronted by the enigmatic Bernard 'Doc' Neeson, flanked by the guitar-playing Brewster brothers Rick and John, and with a line-up completed by bassist Chris Bailey and drummer Graham 'Buzz' Bidstrup, The Angels were stablemates of AC/DC at the famous Albert Productions label. They went from a standing start to becoming Australia's biggest home attraction in two short but intense years between 1976 and 1978.

Still active to this day, there's no doubt that The Angels are legends of the Aussie music scene. There have been numerous line-up changes over the course of 13 original studio albums of – it must be said – varying quality. But the three releases bearing the band's name that appeared in a short space of time between 1978 and 1980 are exceptional collections of music. Much like AC/DC, The Angels would release the odd great song after that most fertile of periods, but they would never consistently recapture the magic of the triumvirate of 1978's 'Face To Face', 1979's 'No Exit' and 1980's 'Dark Room'. These three albums all deserve to be heralded as rock classics. Given that two members of the band – Neeson and Bailey – are sadly no longer with us, now

more than ever it's important to recognise The Angels' contribution to the rock art form.

**WHILE THE** Angels shared a love of traditional electric blues music with AC/DC, the Adelaide band's palette of influences was larger. The group's sound was anchored by those same taut, tight hard rock riffs favoured by the Young brothers. Yet The Angels also drew on the energy of UK punk acts like Buzzcocks and the Sex Pistols, while revealing flashes of the US West Coast art-rock scene of the late '60s, specifically The Doors.

AC/DC and The Angels shared a label and both bands had enough commonality to suggest that Alberts could have worked them in tandem to turn both acts into major world successes. The fact that AC/DC became superstars while The Angels ended up being a connoisseur's choice outside of Oz has more to do with bad business than bad music. In 1979 The Angels split with Alberts and signed to Epic Records in America.

"Our manager went overseas," explained guitarist John Brewster in *The Artist's Story: The Angels*, an Australian TV documentary about the group. "He came back and said Epic wanted to sign the band and that we should leave Alberts because they wanted too big a slice of the pie. It was big mistake, because even though we were on a better slice of the pie, the pie was smaller. If we'd stayed with Alberts we'd have been playing with AC/DC all around the world."

On such decisions careers are made or broken, but that doesn't mean The Angels could be considered a failure.

**LIKE AC/DC**, the roots of The Angels lie in Great Britain. Guitarists Rick and John Brewster (or Brewster-Jones, to cite their true family name) were of Welsh stock, while vocalist Doc Neeson was born in Belfast in Northern Ireland and grew up in Dublin across the border down south. Like many UK families in the late '50s and early '60s, the Neesons ended up emigrating in search of a better life, which is why a 10-year-old Doc found himself 20 miles north of Adelaide on Australia's south coast.

"There was virtually nothing there apart from a few houses and a bunch of sheep skeletons scattered about in barren dirt paddocks," Neeson explained to me in a wide-ranging interview I conducted with him

# OVERLOOKED

The classic Angels line up. L-R: Bernard 'Doc' Neeson (vocals), John Brewster (guitar), Chris Bailey (bass), Rick Brewster (guitar), Graham 'Buzz' Bidstrup (drums)

back in 2011. "As you can imagine, we had to find our own entertainment." Entertainment that was primarily playing his growing collection of vinyl records in the local church hall on a Friday night, "charging a couple of bob on the door."

By the time he was 16 the young Neeson was playing rhythm guitar in a high school band called The Innocents, a group that featured a bass player whose cousin was a bassist in successful English act The Yardbirds. "Even though we were miles from anywhere this made us feel connected to the whole British Explosion thing; The Beatles, The Stones, The Yardbirds and The Kinks," Doc told me.

While pursuing his music young Bernard trained to be a teacher before being conscripted into the Australian army at the time of the Vietnam War in the late '60s, where he was assigned to the infantry and "did a lot of jumping out of helicopters." He was eventually sent to teach troops in New Guinea. By the time he was back in Adelaide, The Innocents was over. Neeson studied at the city's Flinders University with the idea of becoming a film director, yet by 1974 and the end of a course that saw him achieve a double honours in film-making and English, he was unable to find work in his chosen area.

"I didn't really have a firm direction," he explained. "So when a mutual friend told me about a band that was coming together I was invited to audition. I had a terrible guitar and couldn't even really tune it properly, so I just strummed it as loud and as hard as I could. I think I sang 'Sloop John B' at the audition."

This primitive approach clearly worked, though, because Neeson was accepted as a member of the Moonshine Jug And String Band, a non-electric "cheap blues band" that also featured Rick Brewster on washboard and vocals, and brother John on banjo, vocals and blues harmonica.

"We did well with the band and became huge in Adelaide," John Brewster remembered. But Neeson and the Brewsters had an idea to make more money by becoming a songwriting team that could sell songs to other Oz artists.

"We thought that to write songs for other people we'd have to write electrically," recalls Neeson, who was now going by the name of Doc in homage to one of his childhood cowboy heroes, Doc Holliday. "It was a totally new world to us after playing acoustic blues in the jug band, so we had to sort of set ourselves an apprenticeship to learn how to do it. We moved toward an electric sound and decided that we needed a new name to go with it. I remember that I went to the library and came back with something like 400 words that might have some resonance. The word 'angels' got a tick and so did the word 'keystone'. The keystone is literally the key stone in building an arch, the one that sits at the top and which bears the load, allowing the arch to stand firm without the use of any cement. It's the building block from which everything stems..."

> "A SONG CALLED 'I AIN'T THE ONE' REALLY CRYSTALLISED THE SOUND WE'D BEEN LOOKING FOR. IT TOOK ALL OF OUR INFLUENCES – CHUCK BERRY, THE SEX PISTOLS, THE BIG AC/DC CHORDS, THE VOCAL PHRASING OF BOB DYLAN – AND GAVE US THE MODEL FOR OUR OWN STYLE, THE INTENSE ENERGY WITH THE FAST LYRICS."
>
> **DOC NEESON**

The Keystone Angels originally featured Doc singing and playing rhythm guitar, Rick Brewster on lead, brother John on bass, and a drummer they'd brought on board named Charlie King. But Doc and John quickly swapped bass and rhythm guitar duties.

"We were writing rock'n'roll songs and trying to fit them into a band that sounded like it was from the '20s," said John. "So The Keystone Angels started out being bloody awful."

**THE GROUP'S** chops did improve, though, and they soon had a lucky break when their manager got them some shows opening for Chuck Berry. The band would also act as Berry's backing band for his performances, while

Doc would double up as the show's MC. The tour got The Keystone Angels a little bit of national attention, which in turn led to them getting an offer from AC/DC.

"We did three gigs with AC/DC in 1975," John Brewster remembered on *The Artist's Story*. "Angus and Malcolm started telling us about their brother, George, and his partner Harry Vanda [the production team at Alberts]. I didn't think we were that good, but they must have seen something in us. So we came to Sydney, played Harry and George some songs on acoustic guitars, and they signed us up."

"The Alberts owner, Ted Albert, had asked Vanda and Young to find artists and produce them," Doc told me. "Up until that point Alberts wasn't known as a record label and had been publishing music songbooks, while developing a bit of a sideline in selling harmonicas. One of their most successful lines was 'The Boomerang', which unsurprisingly was boomerang-shaped.

"George and Harry came to see us at a well-known club in Sydney called Chequers. That was kind of like our Beatles Hamburg period, playing five or six hours a night, night after night. They offered us a sh*thouse deal, which was par for the course for the time. But it was the only deal on the table, so of course we took it."

After a shortening of the band's name to The Angels, Vanda & Young focused on a tune called 'Am I Ever Gonna See Your Face Again' and released it as a single. It was the only recorded Angels song that Doc ever played bass on. However, before the band went in to record their début album, drummer Graham Bidstrup was brought in to replace Charlie King.

"I got a call from a friend of mine who was an agent," Bidstrup tells me. "He said there was a band in Sydney that had a deal with the Alberts label, was working with Vanda & Young, and needed a drummer. He told me they were called The Angels and it was at that point that I realised I already knew them. They were from Adelaide like me and I'd bumped into them playing gigs in pubs together when they were The Keystone Angels. To be honest I didn't like them that much. They'd been a really good jug band, but had started to play rock'n'roll – though not very well in my opinion!

"Still, they already had a song on the radio called 'Am I Ever Gonna See Your Face Again'. When I first heard it I thought it was Status Quo, actually. But I decided I'd go to a rehearsal and have a jam. To be honest I wasn't that knocked out by what they were doing, but I got on well with the guys and there seemed to be a reasonable camaraderie and it was a bit of fun, so I joined anyway.

"On our first road trip playing gigs I started writing with John Brewster, but the repertoire was all a bit schizophrenic. There were jug band songs that were rocked up a bit, then there were songs where the rhythm section sounded like Little Feat with the guitars on an AC/DC trip. At the time Doc was playing bass, but he wasn't the best bassist to drum with! So we got a friend of mine called Chris Bailey in on bass and Doc became the band's frontman. I remember saying at the time that John Brewster probably had a better voice, but Doc's was much more interesting. He gave us a personality. He was a real frontman and focal point."

**THE FIRST** album the band recorded, simply called 'The Angels', "didn't exactly rocket up the charts," according to Neeson. "There were really good songs on that record, but it was lightweight. We hadn't worked out our musical identity, but it was a touching album."

"Plus we were in a great position," continues Bidstrup, "because Harry Vanda and George Young were so supportive of the band. They had the studio where we'd go pretty much whenever we wanted to muck around and learn our trade. We'd rehearse all the time, play five or six nights a week and go to the studio after the gigs to start recording our ideas."

Neeson agreed with Bidstrup's assessment. "We weren't getting paid by Alberts," he said. "But the money we'd make from gigs allowed us to survive. And the big thing was that we could go to the studio and learn how to record. I showed Rick a chugging style of guitar playing where you'd damp the strings down with the palm of your right hand. We called it 'doing the "nik-niks",' because that was the kind of tight, hard sound it made, all down strokes. Then Buzz played the band the Sex Pistols' 'Never Mind The Bollocks' album and that also had a galvanising effect. But the real epiphany moment was when Rick came in with an idea that became a song called 'I Ain't The One'. It really crystallised the sound we'd been looking for, the sound that was The Angels. It took all of our influences – Chuck Berry, the Sex Pistols, the big AC/DC chords, the vocal phrasing of Bob Dylan – and gave us the model for our own style, the intense energy with the fast lyrics. Plus I think the brothers' genes helped lock them in for that tight playing style and sound. Once we had that model things came together very quickly."

As the new songs started to take shape with a

# OVERLOOKED

cohesive feel that was clearly lacking on the début, 'Face To Face' slowly began to come into focus. Interestingly enough, after producing the first Angels album Harry Vanda and George Young took a step back on the second record.

"Harry and George had produced a song we had called 'Comin' Down', John Brewster explained on *The Artist's Story*. "We put it out as a single and radio didn't take to it, so it was a worrying time. Then Harry and George said they wanted me and Rick to produce the band. I was a little offended, actually, because I thought they'd lost interest. But they said they simply thought we'd do a better job." The band ended up producing 'Face To Face' with Mark Opitz.

"It took about a year for that record to happen," explains Bidstrup. "But it was a great experience. It was a huge learning curve for all of us and it was really enjoyable because we were young and enthusiastic. It's an album I'm still incredibly proud of."

**THE ANGELS** would eventually be introduced to a worldwide audience with a 1980 compilation of their best early Australian material, titled 'Face To Face' and released under the name of Angel City to avoid confusion with the American glam band Angel. You, however, shouldn't confuse that album with the Australian 1978 sophomore effort of the same name, the first recording where The Angels started to coalesce around an identifiable sound. The hard rock provided by the Brewster brothers on standout numbers like 'Take A Long Line', 'Marseilles' and 'Comin' Down' was given a more intellectual sheen thanks to the band's clever lyrics and Neeson's atypical delivery, somewhere between Johnny Rotten and Bob Dylan and best exemplified on 'Love Takes Care' (a bit of a clone of Dylan's 'It's All Over Now Baby Blue') and 'After The Rain'.

"Before we knew it we'd gone four times platinum with 'Face To Face' and progressed from being a fairly successful touring band to one of the top acts in the country," recalls Bidstrup. "It was that fast! "

'Face To Face' stayed on the Australian charts for a whopping 79 weeks. But as was the way in the '70s, when success in smaller territories was built by endless touring and putting out new material every 12 months, The Angels were soon back in the studio working on a follow-up album, 'No Exit'. The relentless work schedule inevitably came with a price attached.

"It felt good to have success," Doc told me. "But we pretty much all lost our first wives because of it. We were in such a furious cycle of touring and songwriting and recording that my wife and I only seemed to meet for dinner. We never got to bond enough, so of course I got lonely and I had affairs. It was painful."

**BUT IT** wasn't just personal problems that were creating tensions in the band. According to Bidstrup it was quickly becoming apparent that The Angels' songwriting team of Brewster-Neeson-Brewster – credited with writing all of the songs on 'Face To Face' – was going to be almost impossible to break into.

"The recording process for 'No Exit' was very different to 'Face To Face'," Bidstrup claims. "'Face To Face' was all about hour after hour in a rehearsal room fighting over the arrangements and every nuance. But now there was a lot less fighting, because I'd realised that I wasn't going to be able to break that songwriting monopoly. It was very much a case of three versus two; Doc and John and Rick on the one side and Chris and me on the other.

"'No Exit' was more a case of 'when you're ready call me and I'll come in and play.' I realised that my opinions wouldn't make much difference, so it was more sensible to take the path of least resistance. They lost a couple of creative heads on 'No Exit', but I don't think the listener would notice much difference in the two albums."

Released in 1979, 'No Exit' was another superb record, once more combining all of the band's diverse influences while at the same time sharpening up their ever-more-distinctive sound. Full-blown rockers like 'Shadow Boxer', 'Can't Shake It' and the six-minute-plus title track offered up plenty of below-the-waistband excitement, while 'After Dark' and 'Out Of The Blue' (kinda like Lou Reed meets The Doors) again showcased the group's more cerebral side. The album made the Australian Top 10 and Bidstrup reckons the band supported it by playing 330 gigs in 1979 alone, a year that finished with The Angels headlining a massive New Year's Eve show on the steps of the famous Sydney Opera House. It became known as 'The New Year Opera House Riot' after over-excited fans threw beer cans and bottles onto the stage. Both Doc and Chris Bailey were hospitalised after being hit. Given that the band were now so huge in Australia the decision was taken to spread some wings. But not everybody was happy about the idea, as Buzz Bidstrup explains...

"In 1979 the band decided to buy its way out of the contract we had with Alberts and sign a worldwide deal with Epic. I didn't want the deal to happen. I think it cost 125,000 bucks to get out of the Alberts deal, which was effectively $25,000 each. Epic was happy to pay the money as a recoupable advance, but it wasn't an

amicable split. Alberts were very pissed off because of the work they'd already put into the band and they'd been trying to convince our manager to hang in there, because there was a huge tour with AC/DC in the pipeline for us. But it wasn't to be."

**THE ISSUE** The Angels faced was whether the rest of the world would understand a heavy rock band with such diverse influences and an intellectual twist. The group featured university graduates in its ranks, dealt in lyrics inspired by the likes of French existentialist writer Jean-Paul Sartre, and had short hair, something of a no-no in hard rock circles back then when long hair and leathers were pretty much de rigeur.

"We never saw ourselves as a heavy rock band," Neeson told me. "AC/DC's look was much more in tune with what people expected from an international heavy rock band, but we weren't following any particular style. And of course there was some confusion as to what we were about, especially in the States. Someone once wrote that we were 'New wave hard rock romantics'! But what the hell does that mean?"

Still, if you weren't aware of the split with Albert Productions, the music on The Angels' first album for Epic, 1980's 'Dark Room', didn't give any indication that things had fundamentally changed. Its opening track, the distinctive and memorable 'No Secrets' with vocals recorded by Doc the day AC/DC vocalist Bon Scott died, didn't appeal to guitarist John Brewster at the time. "I saw it as being a little poppy, softer," he said. Nevertheless, 'No Secrets' became one of The Angels' biggest ever songs. Elsewhere on the album 'Face The Day' bristled with brooding menace, while the epic 'Wasted Sleepless Nights'/'Dark Room' showed that the band was now able to bring all of their diverse influences together in one great song. It was the third fine record in a row from the band, and had The Angels still been signed to Alberts they would most likely have toured worldwide with AC/DC to support the release. Given that DC had just recorded what would become the insanely successful 'Back In Black' album, it's easy to assume that huge success would have followed for The Angels too.

Sadly things didn't work out that way. The band couldn't quite get the commercial foothold they needed worldwide, ended up in debt to Epic, and also succumbed to the perils of internal conflict. Despite co-writing 'No Secrets' with Neeson, Bidstrup realised he wasn't ever going to be allowed to fully share in the lucrative songwriting that was dominated by the Brewster-Neeson-Brewster team. The drummer quit to be replaced by Brent Eccles.

"AC/DC'S LOOK WAS MUCH MORE IN TUNE WITH WHAT PEOPLE EXPECTED FROM AN INTERNATIONAL HEAVY ROCK BAND, BUT WE WEREN'T FOLLOWING ANY PARTICULAR STYLE. SOMEONE ONCE WROTE THAT WE WERE 'NEW WAVE HARD ROCK ROMANTICS'! BUT WHAT THE HELL DOES THAT MEAN?"
**DOC NEESON**

**THE BAND'S** fifth studio album, 1981's 'Night Attack', showed the first signs that The Angels' magic was starting to wear off. The songs were weaker, and even when I heard the record as a *Kerrang!* writer when it was originally released I just couldn't raise much enthusiasm.

"It's not one of my favourites, even though there are some good moments on it," concurs John Brewster. "I don't think it had the magic. And that was supposed to be the one that would break us in America."

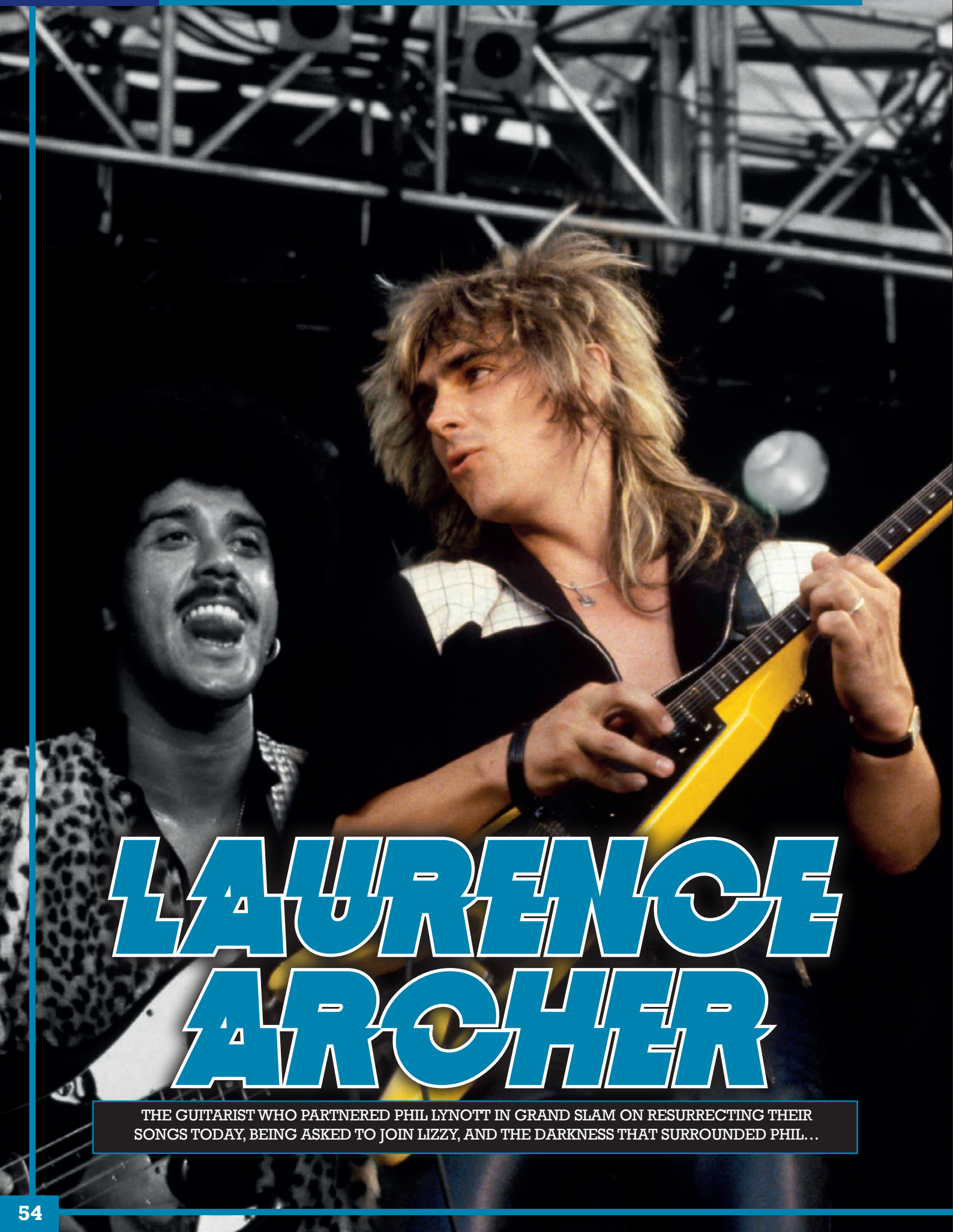
It didn't, and despite having a long career afterwards with any number of line-up changes and commercial ups and downs, The Angels would never again match the quality of 'Face To Face', 'No Exit' and 'Dark Room'. The band remained active until the year 2000, before reforming in 2008 to celebrate the 30th anniversary of 'Dark Room'. The reunion featured the classic line-up of Neeson, Brewster, Brewster, Bidstrup and Bailey, but split again when according to Bidstrup, "the same power trips started happening again."

There was undeniable bad blood between many of the original band members for numerous complicated reasons over a number of years. That led to different versions of the band – one led by Neeson, another by the Brewster Brothers – going out under The Angels name for some time. Original bassist Chris Bailey's death from throat cancer in April of 2013 saw a thawing of relations, but it was Doc Neeson's diagnosis of a brain tumour that same year that brought about a reconciliation of sorts. Bernard Neeson finally succumbed to his illness on 4 June 2014 at the age of 67. "His feverish stage presence was unsurpassed, yet beneath the public persona was a gentle soul," said Rick Brewster.

**THE CURRENT** Angels line-up features both Brewster brothers, John's son Sam on bass, drummer Nick Norton and vocalist Dave Gleeson, who previously made his mark with The Screaming Jets and first started working with the Brewsters back in 2011. This incarnation of The Angels has since recorded rebooted studio versions of the 'Face To Face' and 'No Exit' albums on the Aussie Bloodlines label, as well as a fine 'Symphony Of Angels' live recording of their greatest numbers with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. All of which shows that The Angels clearly hold their golden period of 1978 to 1980 in as high esteem as we at *Rock Candy Mag* do.

They may not have matched AC/DC's global success, nor produced consistently great music. But The Angels at the top of their game are more than a match for anyone. "The music we made always helped us to transcend the bad times," Doc Neeson told me in 2011. How very right he was!

# THE *ROCK CANDY* Q&A



# LAURENCE ARCHER

THE GUITARIST WHO PARTNERED PHIL LYNOTT IN GRAND SLAM ON RESURRECTING THEIR SONGS TODAY, BEING ASKED TO JOIN LIZZY, AND THE DARKNESS THAT SURROUNDED PHIL…

**SO LAURENCE, IT'S BEEN 35 YEARS SINCE YOU PLAYED WITH PHIL LYNOTT IN GRAND SLAM AND FINALLY THERE'S AN OFFICIAL DEBUT ALBUM. WHAT TOOK SO LONG?**

"I don't like the various Grand Slam releases that have appeared over the years, which have been full of demo recordings from when we were in the middle of writing songs, doing things in Phil's back garden or on a porta-studio, stuff like that. I'd been out of the music business for a while, but then a couple of years ago I decided to do a show featuring music from bands I'd been in like Grand Slam, UFO and Stampede. I put a group together and it felt so good that it spurred me on to want to do something more. It was frustrating to see Grand Slam material out there that wasn't how I wanted people to hear it. So I decided to keep the band going and make an album that included a lot of the songs I wrote back then with Phil, all recorded the way I thought they should be heard. I brought them up to date, but they're way more in keeping with what the songs should be than the horrible demos that are out there."

> "I WAS A CLEAN-LIVING BOY WHO WAS MAD ABOUT CYCLING, WHEREAS PHIL WAS SURROUNDED BY DRUGS, DARKNESS AND DEBAUCHERY. HE FOUND IT QUITE FASCINATING THAT I WAS SO NORMAL AND STRAIGHT."

**IS IT WEIRD TO BE REACHING BACK INTO THE PAST LIKE THIS?**

"It's strange in one way, but very natural in another. The stuff you write and then play on the guitar never really leaves you. Of course resurrecting these old songs has made me reflect on my past with Phil. When I'm involved with this version of Grand Slam Phil is always on my mind. He sort of follows me around, actually. Whenever I'm in a pub or a restaurant one of Phil's songs always seems to come on. It's a bit freaky!"

**WERE THERE ANY ISSUES ABOUT GETTING PERMISSIONS TO RE-RECORD THE SONGS?**

"There's always been a bit of a divide between Phil's estate and his mum, Philomena, with regard to who has the rights to songs. But the timing of this project has nothing to do with Philomena's death [in June of last year]. I'd been doing it long before she passed."

**TELL US HOW YOU MET PHIL IN THE FIRST PLACE?**

"When I was very young in 1981 I did a short stint in Wild Horses and the band was managed by Morrison O'Donnell, who also looked after Thin Lizzy. That was how I met Phil. We did a couple of residencies at the Marquee club in London and Phil got up and played with us two or three times. He invited me down to the studio while he was still in Lizzy and he was kind of asking me questions. I think he was already gunning for another guitar player, looking to the future as he always did. I'm not going to say Phil didn't ask me to join Lizzy, but by then I'd formed Stampede and was very focused on that. We had a deal with Polydor, so I had all that going on. I thought Stampede was the best thing since sliced bread and to be honest I thought Lizzy were on the way out at that point. So they went on with John Sykes playing guitar. In some ways I regret that, in some ways I don't."

**BUT THEN LIZZY FELL APART IN 1983. DID PHIL COME STRAIGHT TO YOU TO GET SOMETHING NEW GOING?**

"Well Phil had a solo band that featured [drummer] Brian Downey and John Sykes from Lizzy, as well as [keyboardist] Mark Stanway and [guitarist] Doish Nagle. But when John bowed out to join Whitesnake Phil called me up and sent a car for me. We sat down in [well known London club] Stringfellow's and the next day we were working together. I was still with Stampede, but Polydor had lost interest in the band, so when Phil asked me to throw my lot in with him I jumped at the chance."

**WHAT WAS PHIL'S STATE OF MIND AT THAT TIME?**

"He was very optimistic about Grand Slam, especially when we started writing together. He was in good shape mentally. Of course it was a big change for him, but I don't think he regretted bringing Lizzy to an end at that point. He was vibed up and musically he was on it."

**PHIL'S DRUG PROBLEMS WEREN'T EXACTLY A SECRET BACK THEN. WHAT WAS YOUR TAKE ON THAT PART OF HIS LIFE?**

"I was a clean-living boy who was mad about cycling, whereas Phil was surrounded by drugs, darkness and debauchery. He found it quite fascinating that I was so normal and straight. We had a lot of long chats sitting on the stairs of his house in Kew about him wanting to get clean, wanting to move on and be firing on all six. He did try, but at that time that type of thing followed you around. If you have a habit and it's put in your face all day long it's a hard thing to kick."

**WAS HE RELIABLE OR UNRELIABLE TO WORK WITH?**

"At the start of Grand Slam we did some work in Ireland and the old Lizzy entourage came back into the fold, which meant Phil didn't turn up for rehearsals a couple of times. We had Brian Downey with us and he called it a day at that point, because he could see things might go a certain way and that Phil wouldn't be reliable. Then toward the end of the band Phil and I were in the States working with Huey Lewis And The News. Phil was smoking too much and his voice didn't sound good. He was struggling, and before long Grand Slam was on hold."

**BECAUSE PHIL WASN'T UP TO IT?**

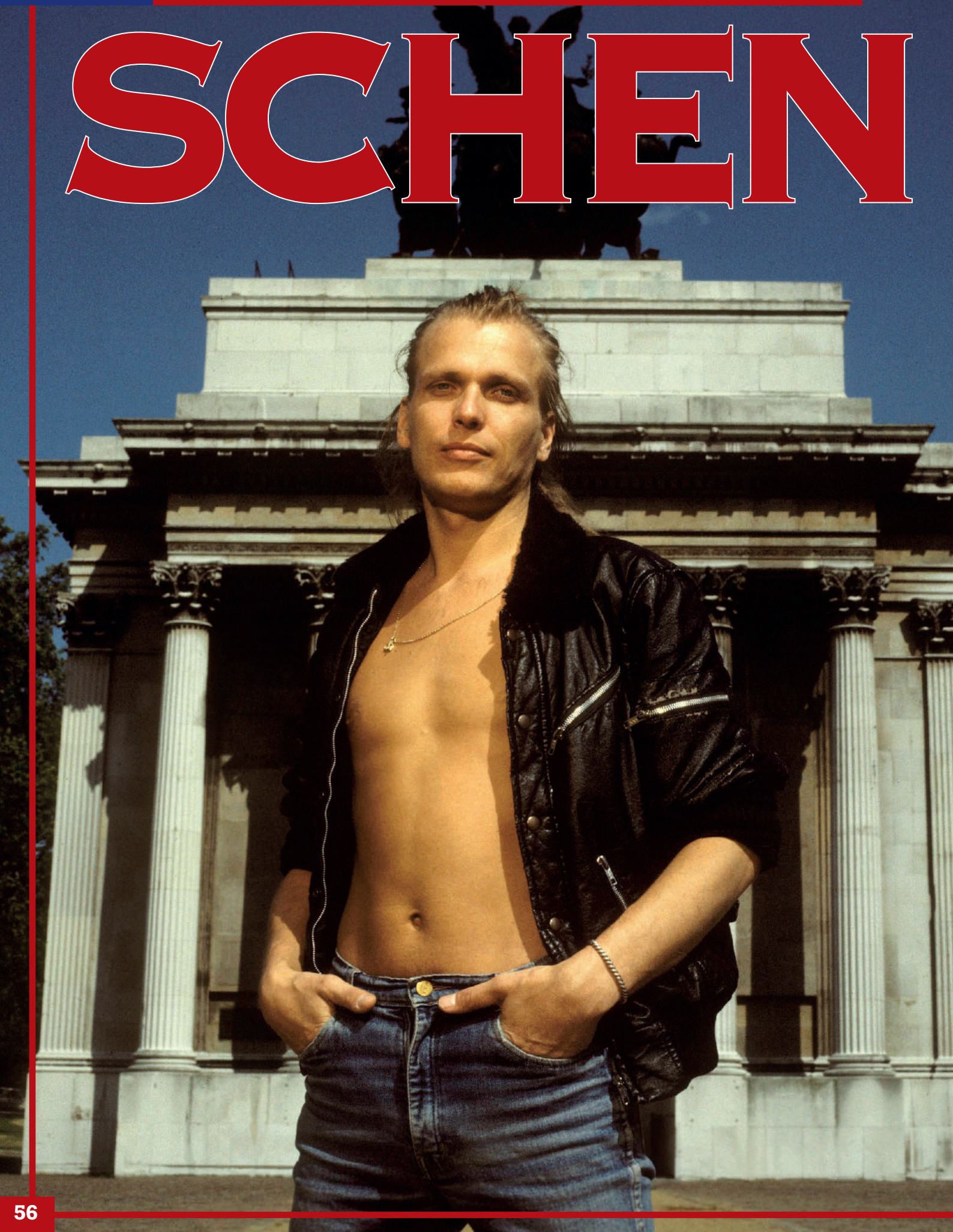
"Not really. It was mainly because I fell out with our management company. Grand Slam was struggling to get a deal, because record companies were scared off by the stories of the dark side and the drugs. I started to get the impression that the management was angling to turn it into a Phil Lynott thing, while also making out that the songs were all Phil's. They released the tune 'Dedication', sort of disguised as an old Lizzy hidden gem, when it was really my song. I was kind of pushed out and then the next thing I knew Phil had a solo deal that he'd scored on the back of a song called 'Can't Get Away', which was another one I was heavily involved in. I never fell out with Phil, but I did fall out with the management."

**DO YOU THINK YOU'D HAVE PHIL'S BLESSING FOR WHAT YOU'RE DOING WITH THE GRAND SLAM SONGS?**

"I think he'd be over the moon with what we've done, because I wouldn't put anything out that wasn't doing Phil and the songs we wrote together justice. They sound a little more modern, of course, but I really feel that I've taken the heart and the soul of those songs and stayed absolutely true to them."

Interview by Howard Johnson. Photo: Getty Images/Pete Cronin/Redferns

# SCHEN



# KER IS GOD

At least that's what rock fans in the '70s went around shouting. But the German guitarist wasn't comfortable with such hero worship. What he wanted to do was focus on the music, wanting to find out "what I had to say that was inside me." So he left UFO in 1978, formed the **Michael Schenker Group** and is still on his quest for musical nirvana. *Howard Johnson* speaks to Michael to find out if he's getting close...

**A HUGE NUMBER OF** rock fans worldwide still consider Michael Schenker the ultimate guitar hero. He may well be 65 years old now, but there's still good reason for agreeing with this point of view. Schenker's enduring ability to summon up blazing rock music that is also deeply tender and full of feeling is what sets him apart from the herd of hard rock guitarists.

And here's the good news. After any number of well-documented ups and downs during a career spanning a frankly unbelievable 50 years, the Michael Schenker Fest project that he first unveiled in 2016 now sees him happy, healthy, emotionally engaged and, above all, playing great guitar. Bringing together a collection of musicians from his halcyon MSG days of the '80s and '90s – including vocalists Graham Bonnet, Gary Barden and Robin McAuley – the man from Sarstedt released a double live album from Tokyo's International Forum in 2017, and followed it up with two studio albums of new material, 2018's 'Resurrection' and 2019's 'Revelation'. Things are looking good for the former Scorpions and UFO man in what he calls "the third stage of my life."

Schenker may have been born in Germany, but these days he lives in London, the city where he first worked with UFO back in 1973. "I like the surrounding vibrations," he explains. "Maybe England connects with me because it was where my development as a guitar player really started when I was writing the 'Phenomenon' album with UFO. I'm more English than German these days, really," he says. "I like that English looseness. I'm comfortable here."

Despite this, Michael is insistent that he will be keeping his distance from his old British chums in UFO as they enter the final phase of their 'Last Orders' tour, where the band insist they will be wrapping up their own 50-year career. "I won't participate," says Michael succinctly.

Nevertheless, UFO was the launching pad for a career where Schenker has consistently won accolades for being one of hard rock's most important guitar players. But MSG was the first time that Michael took charge of his own career, and his work in the period between 1980 and 1992 when Barden, Bonnet and McAuley were at different times fronting the group is worthy of investigation, especially as it's an era that has remained somewhat ignored. In true *Rock Candy Mag* style, where we like to explore the road less travelled, that's where we wanted to focus our interview with this true guitar legend...

**MICHAEL, WITH THE BENEFIT OF HINDSIGHT CAN YOU TELL US WHY YOU LEFT UFO IN 1978 WHEN THE BAND WAS AT THE HEIGHT OF ITS POPULARITY, AND WHY YOU ENDED UP STARTING MSG?**

"Well, the whole purpose behind starting the Michael Schenker Group at the beginning of the '80s was to disconnect. I'd started out just having fun playing music and I never thought too much about the impact I would end up having in UFO. I never realised that I did so much and got such a reputation in the music world, because it all happened unconsciously. I couldn't really understand all the fuss about me to be honest. Around the time of the 'Lights Out' and 'Obsession' albums with UFO [in 1977 and 1978 respectively] people started following me around shouting, 'Schenker is God! Schenker is God!' I didn't feel comfortable with that at all and very quickly I'd had enough of hearing it. I got worn out with the attention and I had to get out of that mental place.

"MSG was created so I could do things *when* I wanted to do them and *how* I wanted to do them, to have more freedom of expression and not have to chase a trend to get a piece of the pie. I was 23 years old and had

Photo: Getty Images/Fin Costello/Redferns

The Michael Schenker Group photographed in London, August 1980. L-R: Michael Schenker (guitar), Paul Raymond (guitar and keyboards), Chris Glen (bass), Gary Barden (vocals), Cozy Powell (drums)

already experienced what it looked like on top. UFO had had American hits with 'Too Hot To Handle', 'Lights Out' and 'Only You Can Rock Me'. We were playing arenas and I'd achieved everything that anybody who wants to be rich and famous could ever have dreamed of. I had it all at that point. It was right there, and I guess that's why everybody was so surprised when I left UFO, because they wanted all that and I didn't. I didn't want to do what everyone else wanted me to do. I didn't look at things the same way. I wasn't in it to be loved and liked and applauded. I was focusing on the music, asking myself what I had to say that was inside me. I had things I wanted to get out of me so that the world could experience them. I wanted to truly open myself up creatively, and I felt that going after success and following trends would never allow me to do that. I felt that if I truly opened up, then I would be able to add fresh new colours that the world had never seen. It was all about self-expression and that was my entire focus. I'd already been exploring that in some way since I was 17 and had stopped listening to music for a time because I didn't want to copy *anything*, even unconsciously. I had to go the way I did and all the choices I made were leading to that destination, focusing on the art of lead guitar playing as self-expression. I had my own vision and wanted to make my own choices. The way I looked at it was that I had just given UFO a helping hand, that's all."

> "PEOPLE STARTED FOLLOWING ME AROUND SHOUTING, 'SCHENKER IS GOD! SCHENKER IS GOD!' I DIDN'T FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH THAT AT ALL AND VERY QUICKLY I'D HAD ENOUGH OF HEARING IT."

**BUT YOU DIDN'T START MSG STRAIGHT AFTER YOU LEFT UFO. IN FACT YOU WENT BACK TO YOUR OLD BAND SCORPIONS FOR A TIME...**

"That's right. I went back to the Scorpions immediately after UFO and that was a mistake. And I ended up having a really hard time getting away from that band at that point because they didn't want to let me go. I should have gone my own way straight away, but I was in demand at the time and I guess it took a while for the way forward to become truly clear to me. Plus it was around this time that I got involved with [rock megamanager] Peter Mensch, who was standing there waiting to greet me with open arms. I didn't know that much about him, apart from the fact that he was a fan. I wanted to disconnect and go my own way, but he had big things in mind for me. When I look back I realise that was a really rough time for me because I was in transition and didn't know if I was coming or going. Everybody wanted something from me and I couldn't really figure it out. So Mensch started managing me and before I knew it I was back in exactly the environment that I'd been trying get away from."

**SO WHAT HAPPENED?**

"I'd managed to get out of the Scorpions situation and the first thing Mensch and [business partner] Cliff Burnstein did was try to put me in a supergroup with [vocalist/guitarist] Sammy Hagar and [drummer] Aynsley Dunbar. When that didn't work out they sent me to the States to play with some of the guys from Aerosmith. I remember jamming with [drummer] Joey Kramer and [bassist] Tom Hamilton in Boston when [Aerosmith rhythm guitarist] Brad Whitford turned up. I think he must have quickly reported what was going on to [the band's vocalist] Steven Tyler and told him that there was a danger that I'd steal the Aerosmith rhythm section, and in the end it didn't happen. I tried some other things out with [bassist] Billy Sheehan and [drummer] Denny Carmassi, Ozzy phoned me up to see if I wanted to play in his band, but that wasn't for me. Then Geddy Lee and Neil Peart from Rush wanted to help me out with some solo stuff. So much happened in such a short amount of time: it was a real period of transition and I was so confused that I kind of ended up getting screwed up by all the turmoil. I didn't look at it all that positively at the time. I was just thinking, 'Why am I being pulled around like this?' I'd been really happy to get away from UFO and the Scorpions, but all of a sudden there I was, back in the same machine. I hadn't realised I was in Peter Mensch World, because in my mind I'd already left all that stuff behind. But Peter was a businessman, so I guess he was aware of all the markets where I was very popular and that's why he wanted to

manage me, to make a big, big business for himself.

"Unfortunately I wasn't the right candidate for his vision, because I was going the opposite way, and it caused him a lot of trouble. If I'd stayed with UFO it would have been enormous. If I'd been on the same page as Mensch with MSG, then that would have been enormous too. But I knew all of that. If you have a solid chemistry then nothing can go wrong and it just gets bigger and bigger. You see it with the Stones and AC/DC. But that wasn't necessarily what I wanted and it wouldn't have done anything for my musical creativity."

**YOU MENTION THE STONES. IS IT TRUE THAT YOU WERE ONCE ASKED TO AUDITION FOR THE BAND?**

"It is, but that was many years before, when I'd first gone to England to join UFO around 1972/73. I'd only just moved into my place when I got a phone call asking if I wanted to audition for the Rolling Stones. I was just 17½ and had memories of reading German magazines about the band, saying they were completely screwed up and looking bad. It might have been hype, but you don't know that when you're a kid. And the guitarist Brian Jones had died and everything. I was pretty fragile and sensitive at that age and to get that offer was a shock. My initial reaction was just kind of 'No way!' There was just *no way* I could do it. I never even returned the phone call. What that episode did show me, though, was that even at that age I must have been some kind of an underground tip, which was why the Stones came after me. Quite a few people had an eye on me even before I'd joined UFO."

**SO YOU HAD ALREADY HAD SOME EXPERIENCE OF TURNING YOUR BACK ON MAJOR BANDS...**

"That's true. But the most important thing for me is that after having such a hard time getting away from the Scorpions second time around, I always somehow just caught myself before I made another mistake and joined another band. I always told myself that so much trouble had come out of it that I shouldn't do it again. There was a reason why I'd left UFO; otherwise I wouldn't have left in the first place. It would have been a lot easier to stay. So when these big group things were on the table I always pulled out at the last minute. I was tempted, but I think in retrospect that I was lucky I always managed not to do it.

"I found myself going back and forth, back and forth, and my head was spinning. There was so much attention and it never stopped. I thought I had it all sorted out, but I didn't. In the end I knew that if I carried on that way, then it would be more of the same thing. I had a real opportunity to make up my mind whether I wanted to stay in that rat race or whatever you want to call it, or whether I wanted to be a musician and an artist, to be free and to experiment with my music."

**SO HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO RESHAPE YOUR WORLD TO MAKE IT THE WAY YOU WANTED IT TO BE?**

"I eventually realised that it wasn't about whether what I did next was big or not, or if it sold as much as what I'd done before. So I booked a little rehearsal room all by myself and just wrote stuff. I had a guitar and an amp and I played loud and wrote 'Into The Arena' and 'Armed And Ready' and a few others. It was around this point that I met Gary Barden and he fitted in with the ethos of what I was trying to do. He was unknown, and I didn't want someone with a big ego, because then I'd be in the same boat I was in before. I needed something different. When I first heard Gary's voice it knocked me out. He had that bluesy quality, especially in the mid and low ranges, and instantly I loved it, because there was so much warmth and feeling there. The minute I heard that voice I said, 'This is good enough. This is all I need.' And that was it."

> "I LOVED THAT VIBE FROM THE '70S AND THEN I DIDN'T GET THAT FEELING SO MUCH FROM '80S ROCK MUSIC, BECAUSE THE '80S WAS MUCH MORE CLICHÉD. YOU LOOK AT ZEPPELIN AND THE SOUNDS THEY CREATED. IT WAS THE EXCITEMENT OF THAT KIND OF MUSIC THAT I WANTED."

**SOUNDS LIKE YOU WON YOUR BATTLE WITH PETER MENSCH TO MOVE AWAY FROM BIG ROCK STARS AND HARD ROCK SUPERGROUPS, THEN...**

"I suppose so. Mensch eventually put me together with session players and that's how the first MSG album was done. We had [Deep Purple and Rainbow bassist] Roger Glover producing, but the band was only Gary and me at that point. Don Airey played keyboards, Mo Foster was on bass, and Simon Phillips played drums. It really wasn't that much of a rock record, mainly because of the looser way Simon played. I thought he was sensational, but it was strange in comparison to what people were used to from me, that more traditional, solid drumming. The album had good songs and was well produced and I was doing things more my way, so that was

Photos: IconicPix/George Bodnar Archive; Getty Images/Paul Natkin; Getty Images/Michael Ochs Archives

a step in the right direction. I could be more independent and more experimental and not have to do things the way other people wanted me to do them."

**YET WHEN YOU PUT THE FIRST PERMANENT MSG LINE-UP TOGETHER IT LOOKED LIKE YOU WERE AT THE CENTRE OF A HARD ROCK SUPERGROUP, WITH FORMER SENSATIONAL ALEX HARVEY BAND BASSIST CHRIS GLEN, ONE-TIME RAINBOW DRUMMER COZY POWELL, AND YOUR FORMER UFO BANDMATE, GUITARIST AND KEYBOARDIST PAUL RAYMOND IN THE LINE-UP.**

"Looking back, I think I got sidetracked from the original idea of staying low profile because Peter Mensch had so much power. He was so energetic and wanted to get to the top as fast as he could. Mensch had no problem finding the next supergroup line-up and I was back in the goldfish bowl, even though those guys were all great musicians. Mensch was like a machine. He had us recording two albums at once [1981's 'MSG' studio album and the double live 'One Night At Budokan'] and it was crazy. Ron Nevison was mixing the studio album and we were already working on the 'Budokan' record. It just happened like that – bang, bang, bang! You don't really know what's going on when things go that fast. I didn't really want to be in that situation in the first place, but there I was all the same. Somehow I was held there."

**TALKING OF THE 'BUDOKAN' ALBUM, THAT RELEASE SHOWED EVERYBODY EARLY ON IN MSG'S CAREER THAT JAPAN HAD REALLY TAKEN TO YOU AS A GUITAR PLAYER. DID YOU ALWAYS KNOW YOU HAD A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COUNTRY?**

"At that time I didn't know anything about Japan. When I was developing as a guitarist in UFO I had no idea about what was going on over there. We were big in America and I was one of the top five guitarists there, so it was all about Europe and America. But when I hooked up with Peter Mensch it suddenly entered my consciousness, so he must have had something to do with it.

"I was living at his house at the time and my whole room was full of fan mail from Japan, so it was a thrill to play there and record the Budokan show. I remember arriving at the gig in a limo and heading for the basement where the dressing rooms are. On the way down there were some gaps where I could see the thousands of people queuing up. They could also see me, just for one or two seconds, and when they caught sight of me there was this enormous scream. It sounded like someone was driving at 200 miles an hour and then slammed the brakes on. It was unbelievable. The audience was so beautiful and it was an incredible experience. Japan always understood what I was doing somehow. They're very guitar oriented and I think they feel people who express themselves through the guitar in a very pure way."

**THE MSG LINE-UP THAT RECORDED THE 'BUDOKAN' ALBUM DIDN'T LAST, THOUGH, DID IT?**

"It didn't, because Peter Mensch believed we needed a new singer. I'd picked Gary for a reason, but Peter wanted to take the band to the next level and he wanted David Coverdale to work with me. Around the time when I was living in Mensch's house Coverdale was hanging out with Mensch a lot. He was always in and out of Mensch's office and there must have been something going on that I didn't even know about, probably something around changing Whitesnake into a combination of my band and Coverdale's. Coverdale probably asked Mensch to get me and Cozy and Chris over to Whitesnake to replace Bernie Marsden and Micky Moody and whoever else was in that band at the time. I think that was the idea, but I didn't want to let go of MSG. I said, 'No, you ask Coverdale to join *us*.' You know that song 'Dancer' from the 'Assault Attack' album? I actually jammed that song with Coverdale. I already had the music and he sung it differently, with some different words. So we tried something, but I didn't really want to do that. I knew Graham Bonnet from Rainbow, 'Since You Been Gone' and all that. He had a great voice, so I didn't see anything wrong with him joining my band, especially as he didn't have a group of his own at that point."

**BUT BY THE TIME YOU RECORDED THE THIRD MSG STUDIO ALBUM, 1982'S 'ASSAULT ATTACK', YOU'D SPLIT WITH MENSCH AND THE BAND LINE-UP HAD CHANGED AGAIN, WITH COZY POWELL LEAVING TO JOIN WHITESNAKE, IRONICALLY. WHAT HAPPENED?**

"Being with Peter Mensch I'd got sidetracked from the original idea of staying low profile. He even offered me Mutt Lange as a producer for MSG. I said, 'No Peter, I don't want to sound like AC/DC.' That was probably an excuse, though, because what I was really saying was that

I didn't want to end up right back where I'd just come from. Mutt was the hottest thing at the time and he was keen on working with me, but if anything big came my way I kind of made up some excuse so that it wouldn't happen. So in the end I split with Mensch, and Cozy and Paul Raymond left the group at the same time.

"I added Ted McKenna to the band on drums and had Graham singing, of course, but the 'Assault Attack' album we recorded [in 1982] didn't do anything sales-wise because Chrysalis were moving offices and I didn't have management. It was bad timing. Everything was chaotic and the album just got lost in the commercial world. But in the *music* world it was the biggest album and it became a musicians' favourite. There wasn't one musician who didn't love that album and, to be honest, that was more important to me. At first I asked myself what had gone wrong and why the album didn't sell. But then I got reports from musicians about how much they loved it and decided that's what really counted for me. The reward for me with 'Assault Attack' was that musicians accepted it. The thing is, I'd consciously left a commercial place, so actually that was the perfect result for me."

**THE 'ASSAULT ATTACK' LIVE PROJECT NEVER REALLY GOT OFF THE GROUND AFTER THAT INFAMOUS GIG AT SHEFFIELD POLYTECHNIC IN ENGLAND WHEN A CLEARLY DRUNK GRAHAM BONNET HAD A 'WARDROBE MALFUNCTION' AND NOT ONLY EXPOSED HIMSELF, BUT FAILED TO COMPLETE THE GIG. WHAT DID YOU SEE OF THE INCIDENT?**

"I didn't see anything at all. All I know is that I was on stage playing my music and when I looked across the stage at one point, suddenly there was no singer. I had no idea what had happened, but it was clear Graham wasn't coming back on, so we asked the audience if we should carry on without our singer and that's what we did. I was furious with Graham and we had a show booked two days later at the 1982 Reading Festival, so we asked Gary back and he was kind enough to agree to do it. The audience were so happy to see Gary, though there were mixed emotions for me, But it turned out to be a great show."

**YOU RECORDED THE 'BUILT TO DESTROY' STUDIO ALBUM WITH GARY BARDEN IN 1983, BUT THAT RELEASE – BARRING 1984'S LIVE 'ROCK WILL NEVER DIE' ALBUM – MARKED THE END OF THE FIRST PERIOD OF THE MICHAEL SCHENKER GROUP, DIDN'T IT?**

"That's right, it did. I made the mistake of pushing Gary all the way to the top of his register on 'Built To Destroy', which was the stupidest mistake I ever made. It really screwed up his voice completely and that was my fault. That point in the '80s was a weird time, when all that pop rock thing came in, and it wasn't really where I'd come from. I liked metal music that was hard, fast and snappy, but melodic too, full of heart and soul. I'd originally fallen in love with the idea of the pairing of a singer and a guitarist to make that music come alive. There was Page and Plant, Ozzy and Tony, Ian Gillan and Ritchie Blackmore, Jeff Beck and Rod Stewart. That was it for me. You don't play too much lead guitar and you *share*. You make it great between the two of you. I loved that balance. I loved that vibe from the '70s and then I didn't get that feeling so much from '80s rock music, because the '80s was much more clichéd. You look at Zeppelin and the sounds they created. It was the excitement of that kind of music that I wanted. Maybe in the mid-to-late-'80s it became something different, both on the stuff I did with Gary at that time and the albums I did with Robin McAuley.

"With Robin I wanted to have a 50/50 partnership, so I didn't mind giving him the M from MSG because I wasn't on a trip. It wasn't important to me. But the experience of sharing for the three albums we did together [1987's 'Perfect Timing', 1989's 'Save Yourself' and 1992's 'M.S.G.'] was great. Those albums did well for us in America, and I'm grateful I had the experience of understanding what it looks like on top. I could let go because I knew it wasn't for me, it wasn't important for me. Before you make a choice it's nice to know you're choosing between things you've actually experienced. So now I understand that my middle years were designed to help me understand what happened in the first part of my life, and to create what I'm doing now in the third part."

**WHICH IS MICHAEL SCHENKER FEST, OF COURSE. WHEN DID YOU FIRST COME UP WITH THAT IDEA?**

"It came to me when we were discussing the idea of having Graham Bonnet's band open for Michael Schenker's Temple Of Rock on our Japanese tour in support of the 'Spirit On A Mission' album back in June 2015. When Graham's name came up my mind went forward very fast and I suddenly realised I hadn't done anything substantial with many of the singers I'd worked with for a very long time. I thought, 'I'm in the third stage of my life now and I feel like it should be a time for celebration of everything I've achieved. This really should be the moment when I get together with all of my original singers.' The problem was, of course, that I have a whole bunch of them. As I started exploring the idea more closely it soon became clear that Phil Mogg [of UFO] and Klaus Meine [from the Scorpions] were out of the question, so I decided to focus on the classic MSG era, the period when I worked with Gary, Graham and Robin."

> "YOU KNOW THAT SONG 'DANCER' FROM THE 'ASSAULT ATTACK' ALBUM? I ACTUALLY JAMMED THAT SONG WITH DAVID COVERDALE. I ALREADY HAD THE MUSIC AND HE SUNG IT DIFFERENTLY, WITH SOME DIFFERENT WORDS. SO WE TRIED SOMETHING, BUT I DIDN'T REALLY WANT TO DO THAT."

**WAS IT HARD TO TURN THIS IDEA INTO A REALITY WITH EVERYBODY IN DIFFERENT LOCATIONS AND WITH EVERYONE HAVING DIFFERENT MANAGERS AND AGENTS TO DEAL WITH?**

"Yes, it was difficult – and much more expensive to put together, of course. We had to be very creative to make it work. But I have a lawyer whom I've been with for more than 20 years now who's very trustworthy. That really helped, because everyone understands that we operate in a good way, a clean way. People are treated fairly. Plus I have my son Taro working with me on the logistical side of things and he's an excellent organiser, which again helps enormously. From a purely musical perspective, though, it wasn't any effort at all to pull this together. Gary, Graham and Robin were all very happy to do it. They all felt it was the right time and between us we finally ended up making Michael Schenker Fest a reality back in 2016."

Photo: IconicPix/George Chin

The MSG line-up that recorded 'Built To Destroy' in 1983. L-R: Ted McKenna (drums), Gary Barden (vocals), Michael Schenker (guitar), Andy Nye (keyboards), Chris Glen (bass)

**YOU'VE WORKED WITH SO MANY MUSICIANS IN MSG. HOW DID YOU DECIDE ON THE RIGHT BAND FOR MICHAEL SCHENKER FEST?**

"Chris Glen and Ted McKenna were obvious choices to make up the rhythm section. Chris was involved in the first permanent Michael Schenker Group line-up for the 'MSG' album back in 1981. Of course Cozy Powell, who was also part of that line-up, was sadly no longer with us, but Ted had played with both Chris and Graham Bonnet on the 'Assault Attack' album in '82, so he was a natural choice. And now Ted has sadly passed away, which was a real shock for everybody. [Ted was replaced by two other ex-MSG drummers, Bodo Schopf and Simon Phillips, on 2019's 'Revelation' album.] Steve Mann was connected with the McAuley Schenker Group [playing guitar and keyboards on 1989's 'Save Yourself' album] and he's a fabulous musician, so with those guys I felt I had a unique combination that ties everything back to the past in the right way. Playing with them in Michael Schenker Fest proved me right."

**MUSICALLY, DID EVERYTHING FALL INTO PLACE RIGHT FROM THE GET-GO?**

"The first time we got together to rehearse it felt great, but that often seems to happen to me. When I got back together with the guys in UFO after 17 years away [for 1995's 'Walk On Water'] it felt like we'd been together only the day before, as if there'd been no gap. It was the same with Michael Schenker Fest. But we still did a lot of rehearsals. The rhythm section guys were up in Scotland, so I drove up and down over and over. But it felt like fun."

**WERE YOU WORRIED THAT HAVING SO MANY BIG NAMES INVOLVED WOULD LEAD TO EGO ISSUES?**

"Not really. The behaviour is entirely different now and it's a completely different thing. You grow older and wiser and all the silliness is gone. All that stuff from the past, all the competing, all the egos... it just isn't there any more. Everyone looks at Michael Schenker Fest as a celebration and it feels right. And celebrations are always easier to deal with than all that other stuff!"

**HAD YOU BEEN IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH BARDEN, BONNET AND MCAULEY OVER THE YEARS?**

"Not at all. In fact, it was quite the opposite. I'd only speak to them very occasionally if we weren't working together. I did a few tours with Gary over the last 10 years and one tour with Robin. All three sang on [2006 album] 'Tales Of Rock'N'Roll' and after that the momentum picked up and we started seeing each other a bit more, though not that much. Then totally naturally it started to get more frequent, almost as if it was all preparation for Michael Schenker Fest. When I finally asked the guys to do it everybody was ready."

**HOW DID THE SINGERS REACT TO THE IDEA OF SHARING VOCAL DUTIES?**

"They were quite happy because they don't have to sing so much! Singers always suffer most, because performing for a whole show takes a toll on the voice. So the way Michael Schenker Fest works is convenient for them in a way, and it means they can always perform at their best. I feel sorry for the bassist and the drummer, especially the drummer. The drummer has the hardest time physically."

**YOU ALSO ADDED ANOTHER OF YOUR SINGING ACQUAINTANCES, FORMER RAINBOW AND YNGWIE MALMSTEEN MAN DOOGIE WHITE, TO THE VOCAL CAST FOR YOUR FIRST MICHAEL SCHENKER FEST STUDIO ALBUM, 2018'S 'RESURRECTION'.**

"That's right – and it was a much bigger undertaking than a 'normal' album, of course. But we made it work with four singers on the album. It wasn't like I was forcing myself, though, because playing is what I love to do. Recording both 'Resurrection' and 'Revelation' has been so much fun it's unbelievable. You can feel the positive vibe of the whole situation. The albums are snappy, driving, hard and melodic and they're fantastic. They show exactly who I am and who I've been. There's real excitement all over this music and lots of sprinklings of the bits and pieces I've learned as a lead guitarist over all these years. It's fantastic to have the four singers doing individual tracks and also performing numbers all together. Plus I also have a guest singer in Ronnie Romero on one song on 'Revelation' called 'We Are The Voice'. There are numbers where individuals take lead vocals, and songs where everybody joins in. You kind of start a guessing game trying to work out who's who. I've never heard of anybody doing anything like this. It's rock and it's metal, but it's different. We're developing step by step, but we're developing out of nowhere."

**HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT FINDING A HOME FOR THESE ALBUMS?**

"I hadn't been with a proper record company for so many years that I didn't know how the project would be received, but three big labels were all really interested right from the start. In the end we went with Nuclear Blast, because they really, really wanted to be part of

this project. So far I'm very glad I went with them. They're really energetic and it feels like a real company. I went over to their offices and they showed me around. It's really big, really professional, and every department is so accurate. It's a real record company that does things the proper way. It's almost like it was meant to be that Nuclear Blast showed up at this point. We fit together."

**HOW DOES THE RECORDING PROCESS WORK FOR A PROJECT LIKE THIS WHEN YOU'VE GOT EVERYBODY SCATTERED TO THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE GLOBE?**

"Well it always starts off with my producer Michael Voss and me in Germany. I have my ideas and my vision and based on that I start putting my stuff down and we go from there. Everybody works in slightly different ways. For example, Michael went to the States to record Graham's vocals, but Steve Mann added his contributions himself at home, because he's an engineer and a producer in his own right."

Michael with his signature Flying V at the Budokan, Tokyo, 20 January 1983

> "I LOVE TO CREATE AND IT DOESN'T NEED TO BE SOMETHING THAT MAKES A LOT OF MONEY. IT DOESN'T MATTER SO LONG AS MY HEART IS THERE. I'VE FOUND THAT I CAN'T DO ARTIFICIAL THINGS, OTHERWISE I CAN'T ENJOY MYSELF."

**IT'S A VERY DIFFERENT WAY OF WORKING COMPARED TO WHEN YOU STARTED RECORDING BACK IN THE '70S...**

"Not really. I haven't really done any recording with all the musicians in the band in the same room at the same time since back in the Stone Age days 40 years ago. And even then it never really went down that way. You'd play together, but only with the intention of getting a drum track down. Then everyone would add their parts individually. So nothing's really changed, apart from the fact that today we have the technology that allows us to work around the fact that someone might be over here when someone else is over there."

**YOU SOUND INFECTIOUSLY POSITIVE ABOUT WHERE YOU ARE RIGHT NOW, BOTH MUSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY, IS THAT RIGHT?**

"Yes. But I've always been a positive person no matter what. That's part of me, the gold within myself. It's positivity that holds me together and allows me to move forward with excitement. I love to create and it doesn't need to be something that makes a lot of money. It doesn't matter so long as my heart is there. I've found that I can't do artificial things, otherwise I can't enjoy myself. It's so important in life to have learned those lessons. I've been rich and I've been poor, and I've been happy in a rich situation and unhappy in a rich situation. I've been happy in a poor situation and unhappy in a poor situation. I know it's nothing to do with that at all. It's all within yourself. I've experienced it all, so I know it has nothing to do with that. You have to enjoy yourself with what you're doing and be there with your heart, otherwise it's worthless."

**YOU'RE COMING TO THE UK FOR FOUR SHOWS WITH MICHAEL SCHENKER FEST IN APRIL. ARE YOU 'THERE WITH YOUR HEART' WHEN YOU PLAY LIVE NOW?**

"Absolutely. I think about what we're doing a lot. I always have a creative side of me that's working. Everybody knows what's on the Michael Schenker Fest DVD that was released in 2017, so if people come to see our show and get exactly the same thing, then that wouldn't be good. I prefer to move forward and explore and I'm always freshening things up, putting my heart and soul into it. We'll have surprises here and there, guest appearances maybe, and stuff like that. But what I want above all from Michael Schenker Fest is for people to go home knowing they've had the very best possible experience of Michael Schenker. That's what I want to give them."

**DO YOU THINK THE EXPERIENCES YOU'VE HAD THROUGHOUT YOUR LONG CAREER – GOOD AND BAD – HAVE ALL CONTRIBUTED TO WHO YOU ARE TODAY?**

"Definitely. I think this is what was designed for me and it's like coming full circle and feeling like a 17-year-old again, enjoying everything exactly the same way. Everything is exactly as it should be and I've taken all of my experiences on board to be where I am now. Of course I have my rock history, but also other things are important too. I think that unconsciously I established something in the first part of my life, then broke it off to a certain extent in the middle years, and now in the third part I'm completely coming back to it. There were times in my career and in my life when I was so disconnected from the rock world that I had no concept whether people would even remember my name. That's how far away from it I was. I was somewhere completely different, in my own world. But I was still learning a lot about life, still playing music and opening myself up to real experiences. I was not following trends. I was on a voyage to the other side of things, experiencing a mixture of humiliation and discovery.

"Then from out of nowhere, somewhere around 2007 or 2008, I came back to the first part of my life at light speed. Having not wanted to be on stage for years, all of a sudden I wanted to be up there. I wondered where that had suddenly come from and decided that it was because I was finally done with my middle years. I was done with the university of life and it was time to move on to what I now call celebration time. I had the feeling that I wanted to be on stage to share how much fun I was going to have with the rest of the world. It was a revelation, and the culmination of that revelation is Michael Schenker Fest."

Photos: IconicPix/MM Media; Getty Images/Koh Hasebe/Shinko Music

Gary performing live with MSG at London's Hammersmith Odeon, 27 November 1982

# GARY BARDEN







The **Michael Schenker Group**'s first singer is delighted to be working with his old sparring partner again...

**GARY JOHN BARDEN WAS** born in Tunbridge Wells, England in 1955. He was singing in an unknown blues-rock band called Fraser Nash when he was plucked from obscurity by Michael Schenker to join the guitarist's fledgling Michael Schenker Group project in 1979. Barden would go on to record two studio albums with MSG – 1980's 'The Michael Schenker Group' and 1981's 'MSG' – as well as the double live album 'One Night At Budokan', also from 1981, before being removed from the band in 1982 by management. The reason given at the time was that they were looking for a 'name singer'.

After working with Gary Moore, Barden returned to the fold later that same year after his replacement, Graham Bonnet, was sacked following an inept, drunken performance. Barden recorded 1983's 'Built To Destroy' and sang on 1984's 'Rock Will Never Die' live album before leaving MSG again. He went on to work with Praying Mantis and Silver, started his own band Statetrooper, and eventually returned to work with Schenker once again.

The result of this rekindled collaboration was a 2008 studio album, 'In The Midst Of Beauty'. Barden then appeared on the 2010 MSG DVD, *The 30th Anniversary Concert – Live In Tokyo* and has been an integral part of the Michael Schenker Fest Project from its inception. He currently lives in Thailand, from where he spoke to *Rock Candy Mag* about life with 'The Schenk'...

**HELLO GARY. IF SOMEONE HAD SAID TO YOU IN 1982 AFTER YOU'D JUST LEFT MSG THAT YOU'D BE PART OF MICHAEL SCHENKER FEST 38 YEARS LATER, WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE SAID?**

"It's hard to say what I have would have said 38 years ago, of course, because no one can predict the future – except Nostradamus! So all I can really tell you is that throughout his life and career Schenks has always come up with some really interesting ideas and concepts. This project is no different and as crazy as it sounded at first to put myself, Graham Bonnet and Robin McAuley on stage together, all three of us were up for the idea of Michael Schenker Fest and trying it to see if we could make it work from a vocal perspective."

**WAS THE CONCEPT SOMETHING THAT APPEALED TO YOU RIGHT FROM THE OFF?**

"Well he's a clever man, The Schenk... I could see his vision right away, to take the different eras of MSG and put something special together around all of them. There was a real story there, with the different singers and the different flavours they brought to the band on the many albums we all recorded. And Michael has consistently written great songs. So the concept was a good one, even though it was pretty obvious that it would be a logistical nightmare to pull it off. After all, there were two singers in the United States [Graham and Robin], I was in

Thailand, the bassist [Chris Glen] and original drummer [Ted McKenna] were in Scotland, and Michael was in England. We were spread to the four corners of the globe. But he likes a challenge, does Michael…"

**HAD YOU MET ROBIN AND GRAHAM BEFOREHAND? AND IF SO, DID YOU KNOW THEM WELL?**

"I remember bumping into Robin at Chrysalis Records in London years and years ago. His band at the time, Grand Prix, was on the same label as MSG. As for Graham… No, I'd never met him before this project, but I'd certainly been hugely impressed by his work and was definitely a fan. I thought the album he recorded with Rainbow, [1979's] 'Down To Earth', was an absolute classic. I saw Graham performing live with Rainbow when they headlined the first Monsters Of Rock show at Castle Donington in England back in 1980, so I knew all about what he could do live, too."

"I DO *FEEL* THE SONGS, AND THAT FEELING RUNS FROM THE TIPS OF MY TOES ALL THE WAY UP TO WHAT'S LEFT OF MY HAIR! AS A SINGER I REALLY WANT MY LYRICS TO RELATE TO PEOPLE NOW, MAYBE EVEN MORE THAN WHEN I FIRST WROTE THEM."

**SO HOW DO YOU GET ALONG WITH THE OTHER SINGERS ON A PERSONAL LEVEL?**

"There's a lot of camaraderie in the ranks and I think this stems from the fact that we've all been there, read the book, seen the movie and bought the T-shirt. We've all been through a lot of experiences, we all know our strengths and weaknesses. The lives we've lived are etched on our faces – and a little bit on my belly! Robin, Graham and Michael are all lucky sods who've stayed thin! We do have tremendous respect for each other!

**HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHAT NUMBERS YOU PERFORM IN MSF?**

"Michael picks the songs. Everyone drops the odd hint, but the piper calls the tune. Or in this case, the tunes!"

**HOW HAS MICHAEL CHANGED AS A PERSON SINCE THE EARLY '80S WHEN YOU TWO FIRST MET?**

"Wow, how long have you got? I think Michael's doing really well. He's happy with his karma, both professionally and personally. I've never seen him this focused and I'd go so far as to claim he's playing better than at any other point in his life, which is really saying something! He's in the happiest of places now, believe me."

**AND IN WHAT WAYS HAS HE CHANGED AS A GUITARIST AND PERFORMER?**

"The biggest thing for me is that Michael is really *performing* when he's on stage with Michael Schenker Fest. I've never seen Schenks attack an audience like this in all the time I've been with him. It makes me proud that I wrote the lyrics to 'Attack Of The Mad Axeman' back in 1981. I must have known something, so maybe there's some Nostradamus in me after all! I think in putting this project together Michael needed to go back and look at his past, which I know was tough for him. He took himself back to a journey that wasn't always easy, even if it led to him being recognised as number one guitarist in the world in so many countries. I'm proud of him for that."

**DO YOU STILL *FEEL* THE OLD SONGS WHEN YOU PERFORM THEM THE SAME WAY YOU DID BACK IN THE DAY?**

"That's a very good question. I do feel the songs, and that feeling runs from the tips of my toes all the way up to what's left of my hair! As a singer I really want my lyrics to relate to people now, maybe even more than when I first wrote them. Time can be cruel or kind to both lyrics and music, and of course you never know how songs are going to stand up to the passage of time. But when you hear an audience singing something you wrote and it's note perfect… Well that's something really special. It means I know my life has been worth living."

**IS IT EASIER OR HARDER SINGING HARD ROCK AT YOUR AGE?**

"Well I'm 64 now. I'm not using that as an excuse for anything singing-wise, but time waits for no man. I do the work to the best of my present abilities, and if I can't hit a certain note the same way I did at the age of 23, then I do apologise. But I'm only human. I don't think that's important. I believe a mature singer with a lifetime's experience will always be able to deliver a better version of a song than a younger person. There's a lot of confidence that comes with age and I think anyone in the band would tell you that."

**FINALLY GARY, HOW MUCH FUN IS IT WORKING WITH MICHAEL SCHENKER FEST?**

"I like to think of Michael Schenker Fest as an organised party and that's what makes it fantastic fun. Being involved in this project has been incredible for little old me. I don't get out much now, because I live in a jungle in Thailand. But when the Schenk calls we all rally around the flag of rock and head out into the deep unknown."

Interview by Howard Johnson. Photos: Getty Images/Pete Still/Redferns; Getty Images/Larry Marano

The MSG line-up that recorded 1982's 'Assault Attack' album. L-R: Chris Glen (bass), Graham Bonnet (vocals), Michael Schenker (guitar), Ted McKenna (drums)

# GRAHAM BONNET

**Graham Bonnet**'s tenure as vocalist in **MSG** was short after a notorious issue with his tackle back in '82. At least he can laugh about it all these years later...

**GRAHAM BONNET WAS BORN** in Skegness, England in December of 1947 and first had success as one half of English duo The Marbles alongside his cousin Trevor Gordon. In 1968 the band scored a Top Five UK hit with 'Only One Woman', a song written by the Gibb brothers of Bee Gees fame. When The Marbles split in 1969 Bonnet dropped out of the music business and made money singing advertising jingles, but he returned to release two solo albums in 1977 and 1978. Bonnet first became known in the world of hard rock when he was chosen by guitarist Ritchie Blackmore to replace Ronnie James Dio as the frontman of Rainbow in 1979. His raw yet melodic vocal approach helped Rainbow achieve major commercial success with that same year's 'Down To Earth' album. It spawned big hits 'Since You Been Gone' and 'All Night Long', both driven by Bonnet's impassioned vocal delivery. He joined Michael Schenker in MSG in 1982, but lasted only one album before being sacked. He then formed Alcatrazz, which featured guitar heroes Yngwie Malmsteen and Steve Vai, though not at the same time.

Aged 72, Bonnet still has a powerful voice and puts it to good use as one of the singers in Michael Schenker Fest. "There's no sleeping when I'm on!" he says...

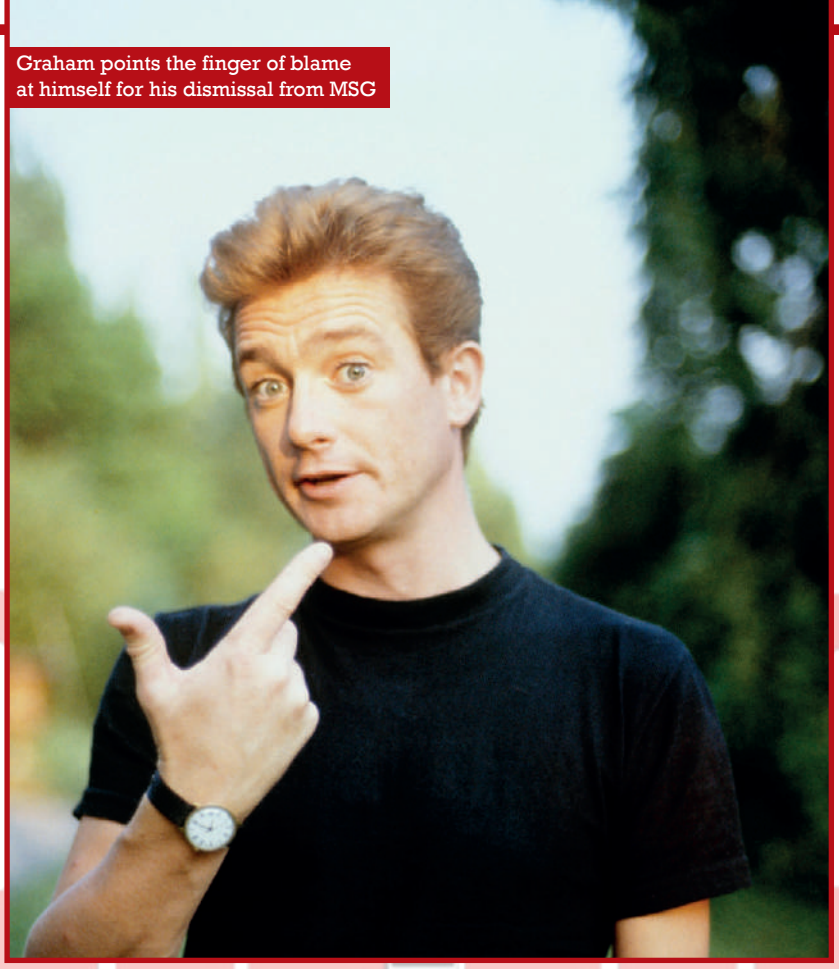
**HOW DID YOU FIRST GET TO HEAR ABOUT MICHAEL SCHENKER FEST AND WHAT WAS YOUR INITIAL REACTION TO THE PROJECT?**

"My manager received a mail from Michael's lawyer back in 2015 where he gave us the whole story about Michael's idea of putting something together with all of the main singers from his career. He asked whether I'd be interested in coming along and doing a couple of songs in a live show. They knew I had my own band, so weren't sure if I would be available, but I said, 'Sure, absolutely... how much?' Ha. Then I said, 'Go up a bit... a bit more,' and eventually it all came together!"

**HAD YOU BEEN IN TOUCH WITH MICHAEL MUCH OVER THE YEARS SINCE YOU WERE IN THE MICHAEL SCHENKER GROUP FOR JUST THAT SINGLE YEAR IN 1982?**

"Not at all. Michael had called me in 2005 to ask if I'd like to write some words for what was to be the title track of the next MSG album at the time. He told me that the song was called 'Tales Of Rock 'N' Roll' and I said, 'Oh, OK. I don't like the title very much, but I'll come up with a song based around that.' So he sent me a track and I wrote some lyrics and a melody, then sent it back to

Michael and that was that. The song ended up appearing on the album as 'Rock 'N' Roll', rather than 'Tales Of Rock 'N' Roll' [which stayed as the title of the album]. But that was the last time I spoke to him before the Michael Schenker Fest Project."



Graham points the finger of blame at himself for his dismissal from MSG

**WAS IT AWKWARD WHEN YOU FINALLY MET UP AGAIN? AFTER ALL, YOU LEFT MSG UNDER SOMETHING OF A CLOUD AFTER RECORDING THE 'ASSAULT ATTACK' ALBUM, DIDN'T YOU?**

"Ah, you mean the dick-waving stuff, right? The *incident*? [Graham is referring to his infamous first show with MSG at Sheffield Polytechnic in England on 27 August 1982. He got drunk, exposed himself, failed to sing and was fired from the band immediately afterwards.] Yes, that wasn't good. I didn't know what I was doing that night because I was completely sh*tfaced. But I did know I'd screwed up, so straight after it happened I caught a train back to London to escape from the band. We were playing a big gig at the Reading Festival a couple of days later and I thought everything would blow over and we'd simply carry on. My manager met me in London and I told him I'd be OK for Reading. He said, 'Graham, they've *fired* you.' Well I fell through the bloody floor and that same afternoon I was back on a flight to my home in LA and my career in the Michael Schenker Group was over. The irony is that I've now been sober for 16 or 17 years.

"But to answer your question, yes, I felt it could be awkward getting back together with Michael because I felt very foolish and embarrassed about the whole thing. It was all a bit stilted at first. But pretty soon Michael realised that I was very relaxed, and that what had happened before didn't bother me, so then he decided it didn't bother him either. My biggest regret about what I did back in '82 was that I was really looking forward to playing live shows with that MSG line-up. I really enjoyed the freedom I had in the group to write lyrics and melodies, because I didn't really have that in Rainbow. In that group I could only really bend the melodies that [Rainbow bassist] Roger Glover gave me. So leaving MSG is definitely a career regret."

"I LIKE THE WAY MICHAEL PLAYS AND STRUCTURES A SONG. I FOUND IT A REAL CHALLENGE WORKING OUT WHERE TO PUT THE VOCALS IN AMONGST ALL THE DIFFERENT ODD LITTLE PARTS HE WROTE. BUT I ALSO ENJOYED THAT CHALLENGE."

**'ASSAULT ATTACK' SEEMS TO BE ONE OF THOSE ALBUMS THAT HAS GROWN IN STATURE IN THE YEARS SINCE IT WAS FIRST RELEASED...**

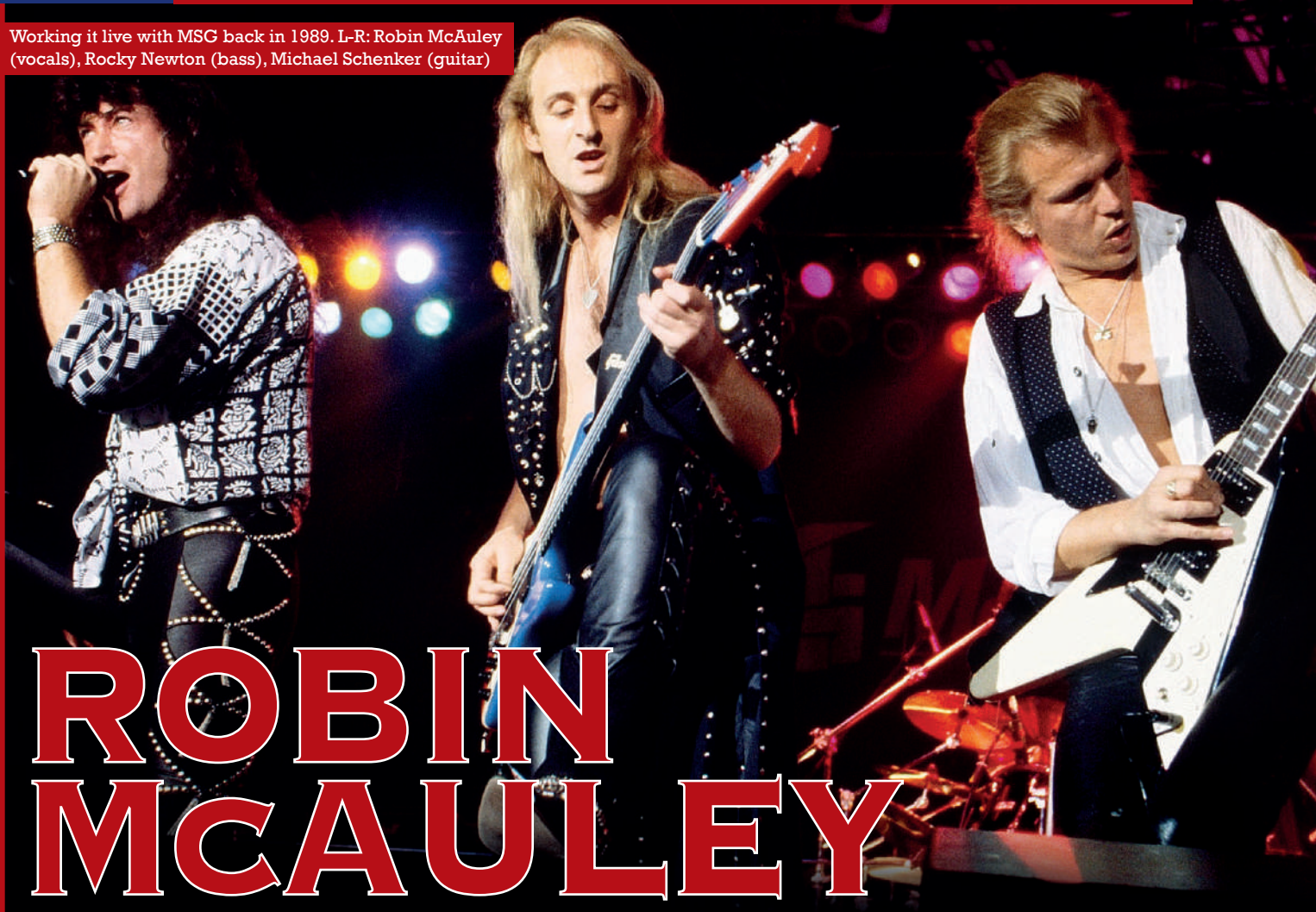
"I think you're right. After all these years I'm still constantly hearing comments from people saying that it's their favourite Michael Schenker album. I can't argue with that; I kind of agree with them. Before I worked with Michael I felt he was too middle of the road, that he wasn't adventurous enough on record. I'd worked with [drummer] Cozy Powell in Rainbow and it was Cozy who got me into MSG. Thanks Cozy! But once I joined the band I could see that Michael was very adventurous as a songwriter and as a player. It was the people around him who wanted him to be more structured and to fit into a specific genre and not get too wild with the arrangements. Once I saw Michael in action I could see how he liked to meander off into the great unknown. I'd be standing there going, 'Woah, where did *that* come from?' The problem was that in heavy rock there are rules. It has to be a couple of verses, a chorus, a middle bit, a guitar solo, back to the chorus and done. But heavy rock doesn't *have* to be about rules. I'd like to think that Michael became a bit more adventurous with me in the band, because I was a different kind of singer to the guys he'd worked with before.

"The 'Assault Attack' album turned out better than I thought it would and it's very much stood the test of time. It's not just because I was in the band that I'm saying this. I simply felt that the songs were better, more interesting and more adventurous. Michael feels the same way."

**HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MICHAEL AS A PLAYER?**

"The best way to describe him is 'unique'. I like the way he plays and I particularly like the way he structures a song. I found it a real challenge working out where to put the vocals in amongst all the different odd little parts he wrote. But I also enjoyed that challenge. He seems a lot happier now than he was back then. Michael seems to know where he's going and he's happy that he's got his old singers along for the ride."

Interview by Howard Johnson. Photos: Getty Images/Fin Costello/Redferns;



Working it live with MSG back in 1989. L-R: Robin McAuley (vocals), Rocky Newton (bass), Michael Schenker (guitar)

# ROBIN MCAULEY

The well-respected Irish vocalist recorded three **MSG** albums with Michael and is thoroughly enjoying revisiting such an important part of his musical life...

**ROBIN MCAULEY FIRST MADE** his name as the vocalist in British rock act Grand Prix after replacing Bernie Shaw (who would later find fame in Uriah Heep) back in 1981. The group disbanded in 1984 and McAuley eventually hooked up with Michael Schenker in the McAuley Schenker Group. The band released three studio albums – 'Perfect Timing', 'Save Yourself' and 'M.S.G.' – between 1987 and 1992, before Schenker and McAuley went their separate ways in 1993.

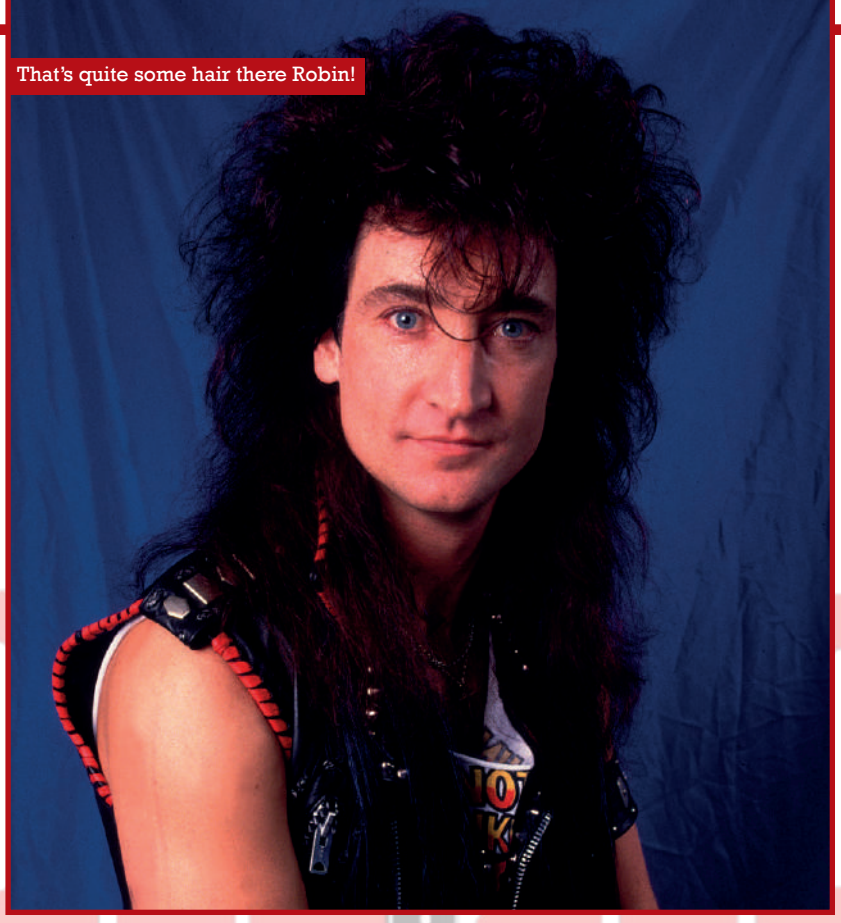
After performing on tribute albums and working as lead vocalist in Survivor, McAuley has become a mainstay performer in the Las Vegas musical *Raiding The Rock Vault*. He's appeared in it alongside many famous musicians from bands including Heart, Bon Jovi and Dio.

"It features a bunch of guys who've actually toured and have really lived the life," explains McAuley. "It's pretty spectacular."

Given that the show is "designed to be flexible so that we can jump in or out," Robin was quick to take up the offer to perform in the Michael Schenker Fest project that became a reality back in 2016. After contributing to one live and two studio albums Robin confirms that he's "absolutely loving it. All I want is for people to leave one of our shows thinking 'damn, that was *so* good.'"

**YOU'VE BEEN REALLY BUSY IN RECENT TIMES PERFORMING IN *RAIDING THE ROCK VAULT*. WOULDN'T IT HAVE BEEN EASIER SIMPLY TO SAY NO TO MICHAEL SCHENKER FEST?**

"Maybe, but I just *had* to do it. When I first heard about the idea I was immediately like, 'Oh my God! I don't care what else I'm doing. Even if I'm on the moon I'm going to get back and get involved.' I honestly thought it was the greatest idea I'd ever heard, and the chance to be on stage with Gary and Graham was simply too good to miss. I was a fan of both those guys because I'd sung plenty of their songs during my time in MSG. And of course I go back such a long way with Michael himself. He first came down to watch me sing in Grand Prix back in the early '80s. We were signed to Chrysalis at the time, the same label as Michael. We were playing a little pub gig in England, The Golden Lion in Fulham, and he turned up with [MSG drummer] Cozy Powell. The next day Cozy's people asked me to go down and rehearse with Michael. But Grand Prix was just about to go out on tour with Nils Lofgren, so I couldn't do it. I seem to remember I got a bit of bad press for that, ha! 'Who on earth is this young Irish upstart who doesn't want to play with Michael Schenker?'"



That's quite some hair there Robin!

**AND IT TOOK UNTIL 1987 BEFORE YOU FINALLY JOINED UP WITH MICHAEL, IS THAT RIGHT?**

"It was a few years later when I was working with Far Corporation [a rock project put together in 1985 by Boney M and Milli Vanilli supremo Frank Farian] that things finally came together. We'd just had a big UK hit with a cover of Led Zeppelin's 'Stairway To Heaven' and Michael's management got in touch to see if I wanted to audition for the band. I think I was the last of 17 singers, ha! But I ended up getting the gig and working with Michael in the McAuley Schenker Group from 1987 to 1992. So Michael Schenker Fest feels like things are coming full circle all these years later. It's great! Michael's playing like a monster. Honestly, I think he's playing better than ever."

**"MICHAEL WASN'T A HAPPY CAMPER A LOT OF THE TIME WHEN I WAS WITH HIM IN MSG. THERE WAS LOT OF PRESSURE TO WRITE SONGS THAT WOULD GET HEAVY ROTATION ON MTV AND VH1."**

**WHY IS HE SO HAPPY THESE DAYS?**

"I think Michael's truly doing what he feels in his heart right now. We've all been bullsh*tted so many times in this business, but Michael's got nobody bullsh*tting him now and I think that makes all the difference. He's making decisions that are making him happy, rather than other people making decisions that make them rich.

"Michael wasn't a happy camper a lot of the time when I was with him in MSG. At that point we were all surrounded by the pressure of being told we needed to do this and needed to do that. You know, 'If you don't write this kind of song you won't be successful.' That happened quite a bit. I know that the minute Michael set foot in the States with the McAuley Schenker Group that started to happen. People were telling him that if he wanted to do well there, then he needed *the* song. To make it in the States you have to have airtime and if you don't get airtime, then how are you going to get the tour? We were steered in a direction at that time that forced our hand. We did 36 back-to-back shows with Def Leppard across Europe when they were supporting the 'Hysteria' album and their record had hit singles from top to bottom. So in many ways that was the benchmark... Def Leppard, Bon Jovi and Skid Row. They showed that you had to have radio to make it work.

"Don't get me wrong. I was having fun doing it, because I love melody and I love hit singles. It was enjoyable for me, because I could see the whole thing materialising. But I think Michael was a bit all over the place, being put together with different writers to get 'the song'. That was the first time Michael had seen Top 40 radio and all the rest of it. There was a lot of pressure to write songs that would get heavy rotation on MTV and VH1. Michael's a different person now. He's happy, positive and very focused."

**HOW'S EVERYBODY GETTING ALONG?**

"What makes the Michael Schenker Fest project so special is that there are three singers with very distinct voices who've all contributed very distinct flavours to MSG over the years. Gary's period is completely different to Graham's, as it is to the McAuley Schenker period from the late '80s and into the '90s."

**HOW'S YOUR VOICE THESE DAYS ROBIN, SINGING HARD ROCK AT THE AGE OF 67?**

"My voice is in great shape, actually. I feel fine all round and have a lot of energy. We do the songs exactly the same way we always did, just the way Michael and I recorded them together. We always agreed that whatever we did in the studio, we would make it so that we could do it live too. A lot of people do stuff in the studio with overdubs and gimmicks that they can't reproduce live. We haven't had to change anything, and my voice is still strong enough to cope. I've never smoked in my life, even though I know a lot of singers who do. I've been very lucky that my voice hasn't ever really given me any problems – and I intend to keep it that way. My voice is my instrument. I have to look after it."

Interview by Howard Johnson. Photos: IconicPix/George Bodnar Archive; Getty Images/Paul Natkin

# GUNS N' ROSES

*Malcolm Dome* was in Dallas back in 1991 when **Guns N' Roses** mania was at its absolute height. After jumping through more than a few hoops he was granted an audience with guitarist **Slash**, but the interview was never published. Now for the first time you can read it...

**BACK IN 1991 THERE** was no doubt which band's new recordings were the most anticipated worldwide. It was almost four years since LA's Guns N' Roses had changed the rock'n'roll landscape with the release of their debut album, 'Appetite For Destruction'. Emerging at a time when commercial hair metal dominated US radio and video channels, 'Appetite...' broke all the rules about what was acceptable in the business of rock. Its songs spoke of nasty sex, surviving on the streets and cavalier drug use, all delivered with a liberal sprinkling of unabashed cussing. In many ways it opened rock fans' eyes to the way that heavy music had been progressively sanitised and subordinated to the rules of what was acceptable to MTV. 'Appetite For Destruction' was as attitudinal as you could get, but it was also anchored by clever songwriting, insistent melodies and a deep knowledge of rock's varied heritage. And above all, it sounded like Bon Jovi had never existed.

**GIVEN THEIR** hard-earned status of 'The Most Dangerous Band In The World', the trajectory of Guns N' Roses was never going to be super smooth. Despite the band's spectacular success there were always stories of heroin problems, internal fighting and stupid, needless rock star behaviour. Drummer Steven Adler was fired in July of 1990, supposedly because he couldn't keep his drug habit under control. His replacement, former Cult drummer Matt Sorum, came in to record a huge number of songs for what would eventually become a twin bonanza of 'Use Your Illusion I' and 'Use Your Illusion II', 30 songs released as two separate albums on the same day, 17 September 1991. Right until the last minute it seemed that even the band had no idea in what format these songs would be released. And even when it was finally decided that two separate albums was the way to go, problems with perfecting a mix that everyone in the band was happy with considerably delayed things. That meant Guns were forced to begin their world tour in support of the 'Illusion' project even before the music had been released.

> "NO OTHER BAND HAS EVER HAD SUCH A FAST RISE. ONE DAY WE'RE NOTHING AND THE NEXT WE'RE THE BAND EVERYBODY WANTS A PIECE OF. WHO ELSE HAS EVER DONE THAT? NOT EVEN ZEPPELIN."

**THE TREK** began at the 37,000 capacity Alpine Valley Music Theatre in East Troy, Wisconsin on 24 May 1991. The lack of new product made no difference to the public's enormous enthusiasm for the band and American fans turned out in their droves to see Guns. But it didn't take long for more problems to arise. Guitarist Izzy Stradlin had given up his drug habits by this point and was struggling to keep his head straight when so many others were still losing theirs. Then on 2 July at a gig in Maryland Heights, Missouri, frontman W. Axl Rose got into a fight with a member of the audience and walked off the stage mid-show. A riot ensued.

By the time I flew into the US to catch two Guns shows at the Starplex Amphitheatre in Dallas on 8 and 9 July, the feeling was that things were definitely starting to fray around the edges. The idea was that I'd interview Axl and guitarist Slash after watching the first show, but the performance was such a shambles that all interviews for that day were postponed. Axl had arrived at the venue hours after the rest of the band and was in such an agitated mood that by the time Guns went on stage – extremely late – he was clearly not in any mood to entertain. As a result, Guns were way below their best and were easily upstaged by openers Skid Row, who'd finished their set more than *two hours* before the headliners took to the stage.

After that performance Guns N' Roses locked themselves in their dressing room and heated words were exchanged. One member of the band's road crew told me that drummer Matt Sorum had even pinned Axl against the wall that night and had to be physically restrained from hitting him!

It was a somewhat novel way of holding what might be called 'clear the air' talks. But whatever went on in that dressing room, it seemed to have the desired effect. On the second night in Dallas Guns were magnificent, delivering a breathtaking performance – and on time as well! My interviews with Axl and Slash had been rescheduled for later that night, but both band members declined to do them. Slash told me that we could speak the following morning at the band's plush Four Seasons hotel. The band's manager, Doug Goldstein, said that Axl would prefer to do an interview later in the year when the album was out. Unsurprisingly, that never happened.

**ALL THE** same, the following day, 10 July, at 10am I headed to room 407 of the hotel to meet up with Slash. When I entered his room he was reclining on his bed, bare-footed and wearing a black T-shirt and jeans. Inevitably the rock star shades were in place. Despite the roaring sunshine outside the curtains were firmly drawn and the light was on.

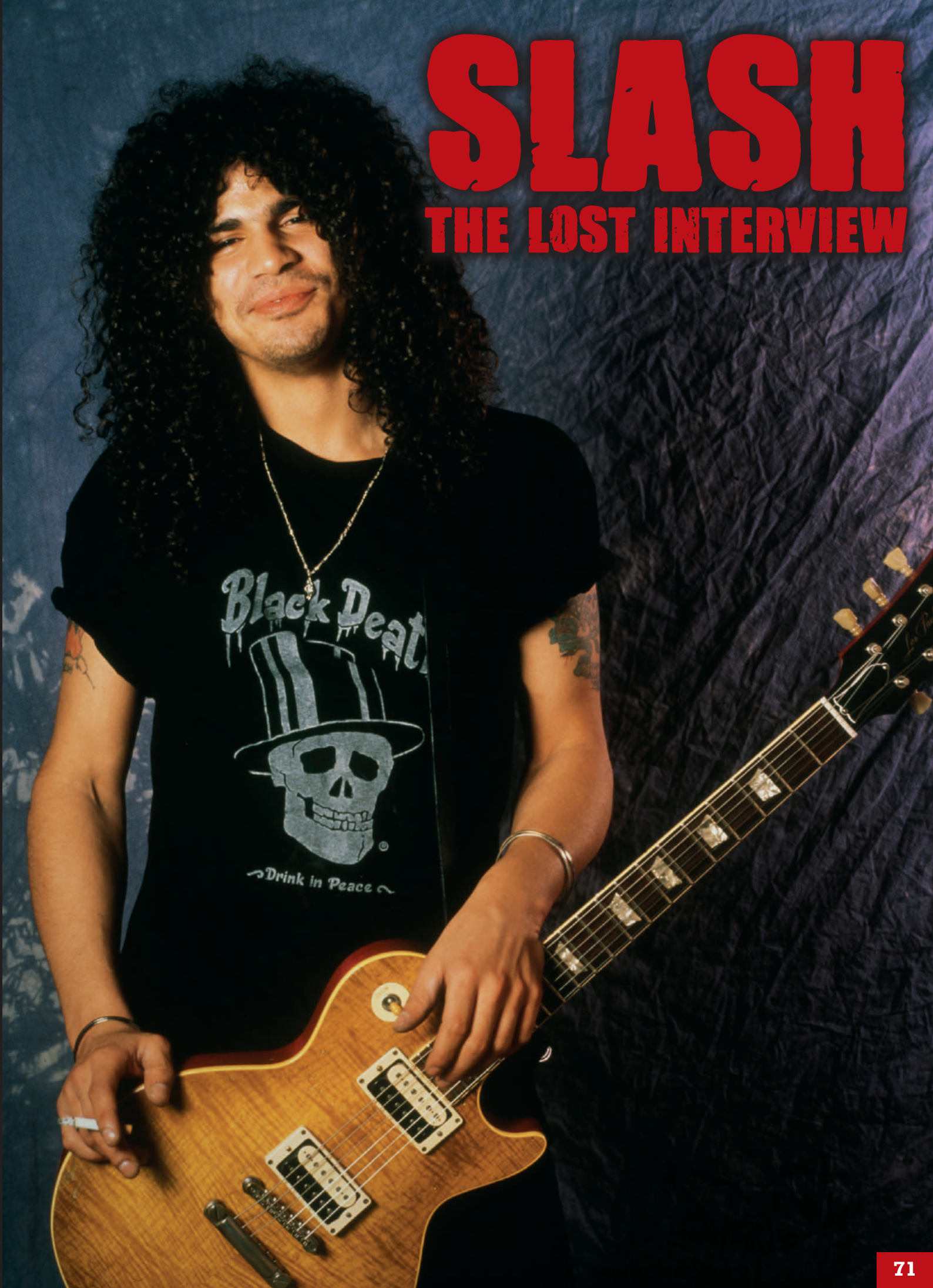
Slash was strumming an acoustic guitar, playing Bob Dylan's 'All Along The Watchtower'. He seemed calm and convivial. He carried on noodling away on the guitar throughout the interview, but it didn't feel like a distraction as Slash and I had what felt like a decent chat. I got the impression he was *trying* to be honest, while at the same time looking to avoid anything that might have upset the precariously balanced Guns N' Roses apple cart. Reading between the lines with the benefit of hindsight, though, it's pretty clear that all was not well in the G N'R camp in the summer of '91...

►

Photo: Getty Images/Robert Knight Archive/Redferns

# SLASH

## THE LOST INTERVIEW



# GUNS N' ROSES

"WE ALWAYS DO WHAT WE WANT. THIS IS NO DIFFERENT. PEOPLE TOLD US IN 1987 THAT 'APPETITE…' WOULDN'T SELL BECAUSE IT DIDN'T FIT IN WITH THE MUSIC TRENDS OF THE TIME. WELL, WE ALL KNOW HOW THAT WENT, RIGHT?"

***IS THERE STILL A STRONG SENSE OF TOGETHERNESS IN THE BAND?***
"F*ck, yeah. We're as close as ever. Not sure why you need to ask."

***WELL, AXL HAS HIS OWN FLOOR AT THIS HOTEL, AND NOBODY – NOT EVEN THE OTHER BAND MEMBERS – CAN GO UP THERE WITHOUT HIS PERMISSION…***
"That's true. But we all agreed to him having this arrangement. He wants his own space and that's the way he chooses to deal with the incredible pressure that's on this band now. And if that's what it takes to get him in the right frame of mind, then that's OK by me."

***THAT SOUNDS LIKE YOU'LL DO ANYTHING TO KEEP HIM HAPPY.***
"I would. Whatever it takes to get him onto the stage every night is f*cking cool. You see, the rest of us in the band understand him better than anyone outside. Unless you walk in our shoes, you can't appreciate what we go through."

***EVEN WHEN HE KEEPS YOU AND THE CROWD WAITING FOR AGES, LIKE THE OTHER NIGHT…***
"Yes. Listen, I don't like going onstage late, but Axl doesn't do it to needle anyone. It's the way he is. We know it, and the fans know it. Would everyone rather he's forced onstage earlier and then delivers a sub-standard performance? Because that's what will happen! No, when he's psyched up enough to be the Axl Rose we all love, then – and only then – should he go out and perform."

***BUT ISN'T IT TRUE MATT SORUM CONFRONTED AXL IN THE DRESSING ROOM AFTER THAT FIRST SHOW, BECAUSE HE WAS UNHAPPY WITH HIS BEHAVIOUR?***
"He and Axl had a chat, yes. But it all ended amicably. Matt's still new with us, so he's getting used to the way Axl works. But he was fine with it all afterwards. People are always looking for ways to have a go at the band, because we're so high profile. But the truth is that we're still a tight gang. Matt and Axl have no problem. They aired their views the other night and moved on."

***YOU'RE THE BIGGEST BAND IN THE WORLD RIGHT NOW. HOW ARE YOU DEALING WITH ALL THE ATTENTION YOU'RE GETTING?***
"It's tough. No other band has ever had such a fast rise. One day we're nothing and the next we're the band everybody wants a piece of. Who else has ever done that? Not even Zeppelin. But the way I deal with it is by keeping my feet on the ground. I don't allow myself to get carried away. I still have sh*t that smells. I still have to eat, and do normal kinda stuff. But all of us are coping in our own way."

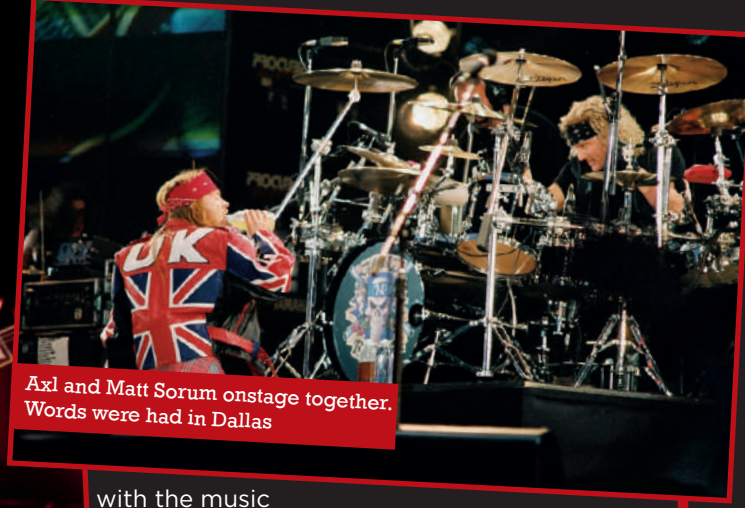
***I SAW DUFF EARLIER AND HE WAS ALREADY DRINKING FROM A BOTTLE OF VODKA. DO YOU WORRY ABOUT HIM?***
"No. Look, I know what Duff is doing – and that's his choice. I don't tell him what to do and he doesn't tell me. If I decided he should stop drinking then I'd be a hypocrite. And he's not as bad as you're making out now."

***HOW DID YOU TAKE IT WHEN AXL CALLED YOU AND IZZY OUT ONSTAGE FOR USING HEROIN WHEN YOU SUPPORTED THE ROLLING STONES IN '89?***
"He was right. We were both getting strung out too much. And we needed that wake up call. It got us back on track. So thank goodness he did it."

***BUT THAT GOES AGAINST WHAT YOU JUST SAID ABOUT ALLOWING EVERYONE TO DO WHAT THEY WANT TO…***
"Yeah, but we'd both gone too far. We had to be reined in otherwise we might have OD'ed. That's not the case with Duff. If we ever think he's drinking too much, then we'll tell him. We're all there for one another. What happened two years ago in LA with the Stones was necessary, and Axl had our backs by going public as he did."

***HAVE YOU COMPROMISED BY CHANGING DRUMMERS?***
"No, keeping Steven Adler in this band would have been a compromise. He did a great job on 'Appetite For Destruction'. Nobody could have done a better job than him. But this time round we needed something a little different and Steven wasn't able to do what was needed. We realised this early on, so brought in Matt

Axl and Slash getting it on in '91



Axl and Matt Sorum onstage together. Words were had in Dallas

Sorum, who's a lot more able to do the things we want. Yes, we could have stuck with Steven, but then we'd have had to accept a very limited drumming technique from him. That would have been us compromising on the standards we've wanted to hit just to keep him in this band. And I know we'd all have been unhappy, including Steven. With Matt on board we've grown as a band, and that's important to us."

***DID STEVEN HAVE REAL DRUG ISSUES?***

"Yes, Steven had bad drug problems and that was making him unreliable. We did everything we could to encourage him to come to terms with his addiction. But he just couldn't stop. Steven's habits were bad for this band, so we took action to try to help him. And when it became obvious that it wasn't working and that we were faced with having a sub-standard album as a result, then we did what was necessary."

***YOU'RE ON TOUR RIGHT NOW, BUT THE NEW ALBUM ISN'T OUT. IS THAT A RISK?***

"Not for us, because everyone wants to see the band. We thought the new album would be out, but it isn't. However, there was no way we were gonna cancel these shows. There are just so many people who'd already bought tickets and we can play some of the new stuff live and give them a taste of what they can expect on the album."

***WHEN WILL THE ALBUM BE RELEASED?***

"It's almost ready. And it's amazing, a lot more diverse than 'Appetite For Destruction'. We've recorded so many great songs and we want them all out. So this will be a double or even a triple album – maybe even bigger!"

***AND GEFFEN WERE OK WITH THIS IDEA?***

"We told them, 'This is how it's gonna be!' There are loads of bands from the past that probably would love to do what we're about to do, and release all the songs they wrote and recorded for an album. But for whatever reason that didn't happen for them. But you've known us now for a few years and understand that we always do what we want. This is no different. People told us in 1987 that 'Appetite...' wouldn't sell because it didn't fit in with the music trends of the time. Well, we all know how that went, right? Now there are gonna be those who say we're mad for thinking of a triple album. Do we care? F*ck no! That's what we want to do. We don't want to have to cut out a lot of songs from the album."

***YOU HAVE A REPUTATION FOR BEING OUTRAGEOUS AND UNCONTROLLABLE. DOES THAT ANNOY YOU?***

"Not usually, no. But every day I hear stories about what we're supposed to have done. Most of these are bullsh*t. There are times when we're irritated by what's said about us. For instance, we were supposed to tour America early in 1988 supporting David Lee Roth, but just before those dates we were thrown off the bill. Dave claimed our reputation as bad boys concerned him. But I think that was nonsense. The reality was that he was scared of trying to follow us onstage every night, we were so hot. But he couldn't come out and say that, could he? Instead, he invented this excuse about our attitude worrying him. I still love Dave and will always be a fan of his. But that was bullsh*t. The day we're worried about what a support act will do to us is the day we stop."

***YOU DON'T MAKE IT EASY FOR YOURSELVES BY DOING A SONG LIKE 'ONE IN A MILLION', WITH WORDS LIKE 'NI**ERS' AND 'FA**OTS' IN THE LYRICS...***

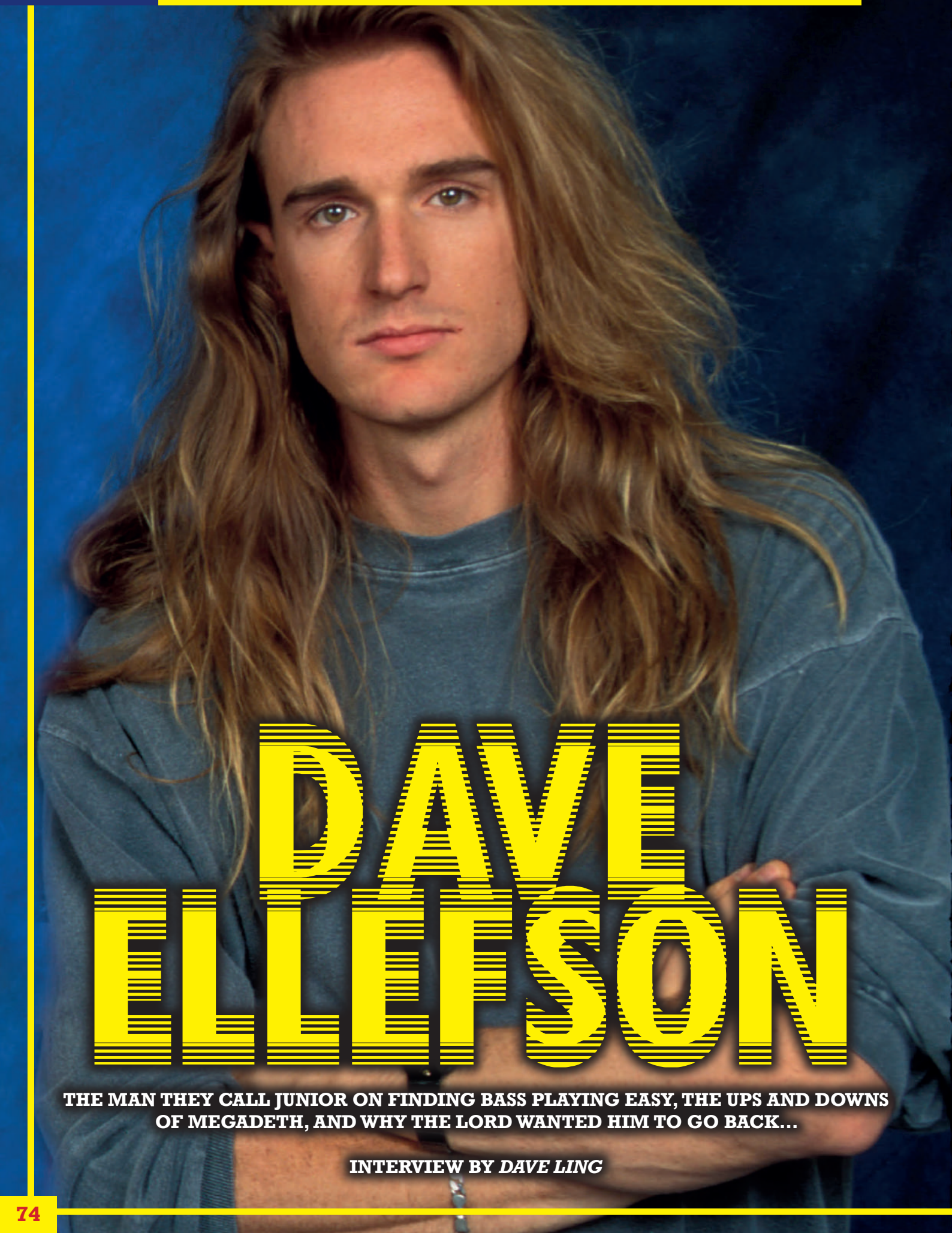
"I know. When Axl came up with it I was worried about recording the song. I wanted Axl to change the lyrics, because it would be seen by many as insulting. But hey, we did it, and I know Axl is talking about personal experiences and not being anti-black or anti-homosexual. So it should be looked at in this context. But we're being slammed for it. I do understand why some people object to those lyrics and I can't defend Axl for his language. But knowing where this came from, I appreciate he's not being racist or homophobic."

***DO YOU THINK THERE WILL STILL BE A GUNS N' ROSES IN THE 21ST CENTURY?***

"Who knows? That's nine years away. If you'd asked me in 1987 where this band would be in 1991, I could never have predicted the success we've had. So I wouldn't even start to think about where I will be in 2000. As long as it makes sense Guns N' Roses will be around. The one thing I will tell you is that if we ever compromise on anything, however small, then this band is over. Finished. What we want to be remembered as is the band that did everything on its own terms, no matter what."

Photos: Getty Images/Krasner/Trebitz/Redferns; Getty Images/Kevin Mazur/WireImage; Getty Images/Pete Still/Redferns

RAPID FIRE RECALL



# DAVE ELLEFSON

**THE MAN THEY CALL JUNIOR ON FINDING BASS PLAYING EASY, THE UPS AND DOWNS OF MEGADETH, AND WHY THE LORD WANTED HIM TO GO BACK...**

**INTERVIEW BY *DAVE LING***

## GROWING UP IN JACKSON, MINNESOTA

"Jackson is a quaint, extremely small town, a place where everything is wonderful and full of lovely, industrious people. I had an idyllic upbringing there, with great family, friends and schooling. It was only my love of rock'n'roll that got in the way of all that goodness."

## RELOCATING TO LOS ANGELES

"Going to LA with my best friend Greg Handevidt in 1983 was like entering a whole new world. The guys who'd been posters on my wall – the likes of Eddie Van Halen and Gene Simmons – lived right up the street. It was an end to dreaming about making it in music; this was the big league. Greg said it best when he said we were hicks, but within a week of arriving in LA I met Dave Mustaine, which was the best thing that ever happened for both of us. Dave wanted to get something going musically, but he was also a little on the fence. He kept saying, 'If this doesn't work out, I'm going to go into computers.' The Minnesota team had the drive. It was Greg's idea to call the band Megadeth and I did a lot of stuff like calling promoters."

Junior and Dave Mustaine getting up each other's noses in 1986. It often happened.

"DAVE WAS VERY MUCH THE ALPHA MALE. IF THERE WAS ANOTHER ALPHA IN THE ROOM HE WOULD HAVE TO GET AHEAD OF THEM, AND I REALISED VERY QUICKLY THAT IT WAS BETTER TO BE *ON* DAVE'S TEAM THAN *OFF* IT."

## DAVE MUSTAINE

"Dave was very much the alpha male. If there was another alpha in the room he would have to get ahead of them, and I realised very quickly that it was better to be *on* Dave's team than *off* it. It was good to stand behind Dave during the journey from sh*tty little clubs with hecklers all the way up to the biggest arenas and festivals in the world. He was like a big brother to me. When I first met Dave, clearly he was a rock star. Though they were unfamiliar to me he kept on talking about this band Metallica that he'd been in. They were known in certain places, but not in the Midwest, so Greg and I had no idea. But Dave was very, very confident. He had a vision and he spoke of parity with Judas Priest, Iron Maiden and Motörhead. He'd already traversed those same back alleys with Metallica and knew how to reach the next level."

## MEGADETH

"Dave, Greg and I got together with our first drummer, Dijon Carruthers, and for while there was a singer. We rehearsed in Glendale and had the nucleus of something that would work. It was just a matter of weeding out the people who wouldn't go the distance. Our challenge in Los Angeles was that the place was full of musicians in the Quiet Riot style. The closest to the type of guy we were after was Kerry King [the guitarist who played some live dates with Megadeth in '84 before returning to Slayer]. He really understood what we wanted to do. But by and large we were an island unto ourselves in LA. And as soon as we went to San Francisco it was obvious why that move had paid off for Metallica."

## THRASH METAL

"Although it went on to become big business, in the very early days thrash was considered a joke, especially in LA. That's why we ignored Sunset Strip clubs like The Whisky and concentrated on outlying areas like The Country Club in Reseda. Thrash was born in the suburbs, not in the epicentre of Hollywood. When we got to the Bay Area [of San Francisco] and met the guys from Exodus there was a whole community that just ate and drank that stuff. The arrival of the Big Four [Metallica, Megadeth, Slayer and Anthrax] served as an affirmation of the scene. I remember sitting at a hotel bar with Ronnie James Dio when we supported Dio in 1988. By that point we'd already played with Motörhead and Alice Cooper. Ronnie was talking to me about branding before it became a buzzword. He'd already made himself into a brand, but at that point thrash metal was still young. That's what thrash had to do."

## THE MEGADETH PECKING ORDER

"Dave wrote 'Killing Is My Business...' and 'Peace Sells...' He's a great writer and I always understood that. I know that I'm vice president to his president and I've always been OK with that. From the outside Megadeth probably appeared collaborative and maybe at our commercial peak there was a bit of that. But I'm not going to lie. In recent years those moments of teamwork have diminished. I'm at peace with that, because I knew that would be the case from the very beginning."

## METALLICA

"Those guys were looking for a new bass player after Jason Newsted left in 2001. Jason had been my friend from his days with Flotsam And Jetsam. There was ►

Photos: Getty Images/Mick Hutson/Redferns; IconicPix/George Chin

# RAPID FIRE RECALL

a conversation in and around our band... 'What would happen if Ellefson should get the call [from Metallica]?' But I didn't get the call. Why, I don't know. A year earlier, when the rumours began and we'd just recorded 'The World Needs A Hero', Dave had given me his blessing to go for it. He knew that it would have just been too huge a gig to turn down. To me that was a real sign of his friendship. Though I was still a member of Megadeth, had things turned out differently, it's an opportunity I would have had to consider. I was a huge fan of Metallica from the earliest days right through to Side A of 'The Black Album' [in 1991]. I did pick up a bass and played along to some Metallica stuff. That made me realise how different it is to Megadeth music. There are similarities, of course, but the phrasing is very unalike. Largely, it's the way that Dave and [Metallica frontman] James [Hetfield] sing over their riffs. They're both vastly different bands."

## FALLING OUT WITH MUSTAINE

"The band ended in 2002 when Dave had to walk away [after he damaged a radial nerve in his left arm]. The disbanding was very sudden. I couldn't afford not to work and Dave asked me to carry on by overseeing the band's legacy. But there wasn't enough money in that. That was the root of it all. Two years later when Dave called me about coming back he didn't know whether the album he was working on ['The System Has Failed'] would be a Megadeth album or a solo release. In the end he was talked into making it a Megadeth record, and it came out under new terms. Dave and I had been the only two band members under contract and I was not OK with the restructuring. That's when I filed my lawsuit [for $18.5 million for unpaid merchandise and publishing royalties, later dismissed]. Of course things became really ugly. Each of us said terrible things about the other in the press. That was very unpleasant. I don't know about Dave, but the things I said back then were driven by fear. I was afraid of losing my identity. I was a young man with a young family, which is very expensive. And everyone got involved in the negativity. I'll tell you this, though. The first bass player Dave brought in to replace me [James MacDonough] later sent a nice message saying: 'Hey, I'm sorry for everything I said.' That was very kind of him."

> "IN THE VERY EARLY DAYS THRASH WAS CONSIDERED A JOKE, ESPECIALLY IN L.A. THAT'S WHY WE IGNORED SUNSET STRIP CLUBS LIKE THE WHISKY AND CONCENTRATED ON OUTLYING AREAS LIKE THE COUNTRY CLUB IN RESEDA. THRASH WAS BORN IN THE SUBURBS, NOT IN THE EPICENTRE OF HOLLYWOOD."

## F5

"When I was out of Megadeth I worked in artist relations for Peavey Amplification. I needed to make music again, so I formed my little band F5. I was very realistic about the odds against us being successful, but we made a couple of albums ['A Drug For All Seasons' and 'The Reckoning', released in 2005 and 2008 respectively] and I fell in love with the creative process all over again. I really enjoyed the collaborative effort, because it was so different to Megadeth."

## RETURNING TO MEGADETH

"The roles Dave and I played were long established. When I came back to the band in 2010 I said to myself, 'Let Dave have this thing.' Although attorneys advised me against it, I felt there was no sense in fighting. After all, there are two ways to win a tug of war. One is to yank the other guy over the line, and the other is to let go of the rope. There's far more peace in simply letting go. It gave Dave an opportunity to put Megadeth back the way he wanted to, with him 100 per cent in charge, creatively speaking. He was very tired of people like Bud Prager [the band's former manager from the controversial 'Risk' era] telling him what to do. And I got to return to the band, which is what I wanted."

## REBUILDING A FRIENDSHIP

"When I walked through the door Dave told me, 'Hey, I'm so glad you're back. I need you here. Things are a lot easier when you're around.' That was all I needed to hear. Those words covered everything. My lawsuit with him wasn't all about money. It was more to do with ensuring that I would be taken care of moving forward. Dave and I had had a relationship for so many decades that it was like being married. It wasn't like I was just some bass player who'd been on one record. The two of us had fallen out very badly, but in the end it was easy to pick things up again. For that I give 100 per cent credit to the grace of God. That's a place that both Dave and I now come from."

## CHRISTIANITY

"Getting sober through the 12-step programme in 1990 began my spiritual journey, bringing me back in touch with my Lutheran faith. I've found that when you set your sights on heavenly matters, then earthly issues matter less and less. After we got back together Dave and I began to speak in what was almost a different language. We conversed heart to heart. That makes all of the other crap in the world just disappear and it was the bridge to our reconciliation. It made me realise that as much as it has to do with music, my role in Megadeth is also to be a friend to Dave. Playing the bass is the easy part; I've done that for so many years. Dave has been misunderstood by a lot of people and that's mainly because in our darkest days so many drugs were involved. But in our best days – right now – we're clean and clear-headed and are on the most soul-to-soul, brother-to-brother level possible. When the Lord wanted me to go back to Megadeth and to be there for Dave when he needed me, that's what happened."

## COMBINING FAITH AND METAL

"I have no problem in aligning those two things. Though we were inquisitive in looking into the abyss, Megadeth was never a Satanic rock band. With early songs 'The Conjuring' and 'Bad Omen', we explored those topics and we weren't alone in that. But by 'So Far, So Good... So What!' [in 1988] we'd left that path. When I got sober I began thinking of God as in G-O-D... Good Orderly Direction. That made it real simple for me."

Megadeth photographed at the UIC Pavilion, Chicago, 25 February 1988. L-R: Jeff Young (guitar), Dave Mustaine (lead vocals and guitar), Dave Ellefson (bass), Chuck Behler (drums)

## AVIAN

"I've a friend named Don Salter who has a studio in Phoenix called The Saltmine, where Megadeth once worked. Don became a good friend of mine, especially when Megadeth ended. He got me involved in producing younger artists. Avian was the beginning of that. I brought in their singer Lance King, who'd been in Balance Of Power, and he was such a good fit that I turned over my production role to him because I was becoming busy with other stuff."

## HAIL!

"A manager friend of mine, who'd taken Bruce Kulick from Kiss to Brazil for some shows, called me with the idea of putting together an all-star band and taking it to South America in early 2009. It started out with me and drummer Jimmy DeGrasso, who'd also been in Megadeth. We brought in Andreas Kisser from Sepultura and Tim 'Ripper' Owens from Judas Priest. We rehearsed for a day in Chile and decided to put on a show the following night. It was completely wild. There have been a lot of those all-star bands, including Metal Allegiance, which I'm also a part of. But that tour of Chile with Hail! was off the hook, and that's how I ended up becoming a good friend of Ripper's."

## ELLEFSON MUSIC PRODUCTIONS

"I started EMP in 2015 after producing a young band called Doll Skin. It was so hard to get them a record deal that my business partner Thom Hazaert and I decided to form our own label. I love the ideology of putting something back into music. That means we do artist-friendly deals with our bands, which makes me proud."

## FILM

"I started getting interested in the film world when I met Drew Fortier from Bang Tango, who'd interned at EMP. Drew had made a documentary about Bang Tango [*Attack Of Life: The Bang Tango Movie*] and we've now formed our own production house to get it out. It'll be ready next year."

## *MORE LIFE WITH DETH*

"*More Life With Deth* is my second book [first book *My Life With Deth* was published in 2013] and it covers lots of things that people probably don't know about me. My co-author, Thom Hazaert, went to friends like Greg Handevidt, KK Downing [from Judas Priest], Mark Tremonti [of Alter Bridge], Brian Slagel [from Metal Blade Records] and Jay Reynolds [of Malice] and that gives a different insight. I wanted to give Jay a voice in the telling of my story. He and I spent lots of time together in the trenches of Hollywood in our earlier years. My friend Brad Schmidt moved to Hollywood with Greg and me and here he tells the story of how we met Dave Mustaine for the first time. Although people think they know that story it's never really been told this way. All these guys weighed in to explain what it was like to be part of a cultural phenomenon."

## PLAYING WITH JUDAS PRIEST ALUMNI

"KK Downing and I became pals when Megadeth toured with Priest for their 'Painkiller' album in 1990. I have empathy with KK, because like him I was the co-founder of a big band. I was a writer and an identifiable face, and then suddenly one day I wasn't in the band any more – just like him. KK is very open in his book in explaining the reasons for that, and I consider him a wonderful human being. The idea of us playing together was three years in the making and it made sense to tie it in with the release of my solo album, 'Sleeping Giants'. Obviously I know Ripper Owens from Hail! And when KK suggested bringing Les Binks in, I said, 'OK, let's play the 'Unleashed In The East' album.' KK belongs onstage and it was fun to form what was essentially a new band with him. After playing live together I said to him, 'I hope you're OK to do some travelling.' Why? Because I really do think there will be more from all of us together."

Photo: Getty Images/Paul Natkin

# FRANK MARINO

Photo: Getty Images/Paul Natkin

# STRANGE UNIVERSE

Canadian über-guitarist **Frank Marino** has always followed his own unique path, which is probably why his music has always had such intense, free-flowing charm. *Howard Johnson* talks to the man who came back from acid trips and hospitalisation to live long and prosper...

**FIVE MINUTES INTO MY** interview with Frank Marino I stop looking at my list of prepared questions. Why? Because it's abundantly clear that it most definitely won't be *me* dictating the pathway of our conversation. Chatting with the 65-year-old Canadian guitar player and singer is like listening to one of his albums. What you get above all else is heart and soul. What you don't get is overbearing *structure*. So I quickly realise that there's no point trying to *direct* the man from Montreal. Much better to go with the flow and enjoy the ride.

"On almost every record I ever made," he tells me. "On day one of recording not a single song was written. I can only think of very odd exceptions. 'Strange Universe' was written beforehand, but it was totally different to what ended up being recorded. And there were one or two others that we played very early on. But 99 per cent of the music was done on the spot. 'Dragonfly' was written the night I went to the studio. 'Ordinary Man' was written the night I went to the studio. Isn't that where the fun is?"

Francesco Antonio Marino is in fine form when I call him at home in Montreal. He's energised about a new DVD of a six-hour concert, *Live At The Agora Theatre*, that he's just put out. The uncompromising nature of the release says much about the artistic integrity of the man who's been making guitar music since way back in 1972. But it still took a long time for Frank to agree to this expansive visual recording of his work.

"When you read a book you become a participant in the author's ideas," he tells me. "The writer describes things, but you make the pictures. When you watch a movie they *show* you the pictures. There's no way you can decide for yourself that a stairway is twisted and made out of wrought iron when they show you that it's straight and made out of wood. You can't *imagine* in film. You become a passive observer. Now go back to the '60s. When we got the first Pink Floyd album we listened to the tunes. And when we were listening to that music we were imagining things. It was on vinyl. There was no video. So when we listen to music we participate in the creativity because it lets us use our imagination and our own creativity. The music promoted that process, whereas the rock video doesn't let us do that.

"So when they finally convinced me to do this DVD project after 20 years of saying no, I said 'OK, we'll do as much as possible in one day. I'll only do it once and I'll never do it again.' I said to the director, Chris Hilson, 'I want to bring people onto the stage and film them playing music, something like [director Martin] Scorsese did with *The Last Waltz*. Don't gimme the crowd shots, the cheering, the laser show, and the fast changes all the time. Just let people live on the stage.' I told him that I was going to mix the music from the centre of the stage, not from 10 rows back in the crowd. I want people to get that feeling of what it's like being on the stage, because by doing it that way we're not making them observers. You know? In some ways the DVD is even better when you shut the screen, because I want people to love music for music."

**FRANK MARINO'S** abiding passion has never been about anything else but the music. His distaste for the music *business* has been well documented, which is perhaps why he's always existed on the fringes, well known and much appreciated in certain circles, but never a man of the mainstream. Frank best explains where and how he exists when he talks about the experience of touring with Queen back in the day.

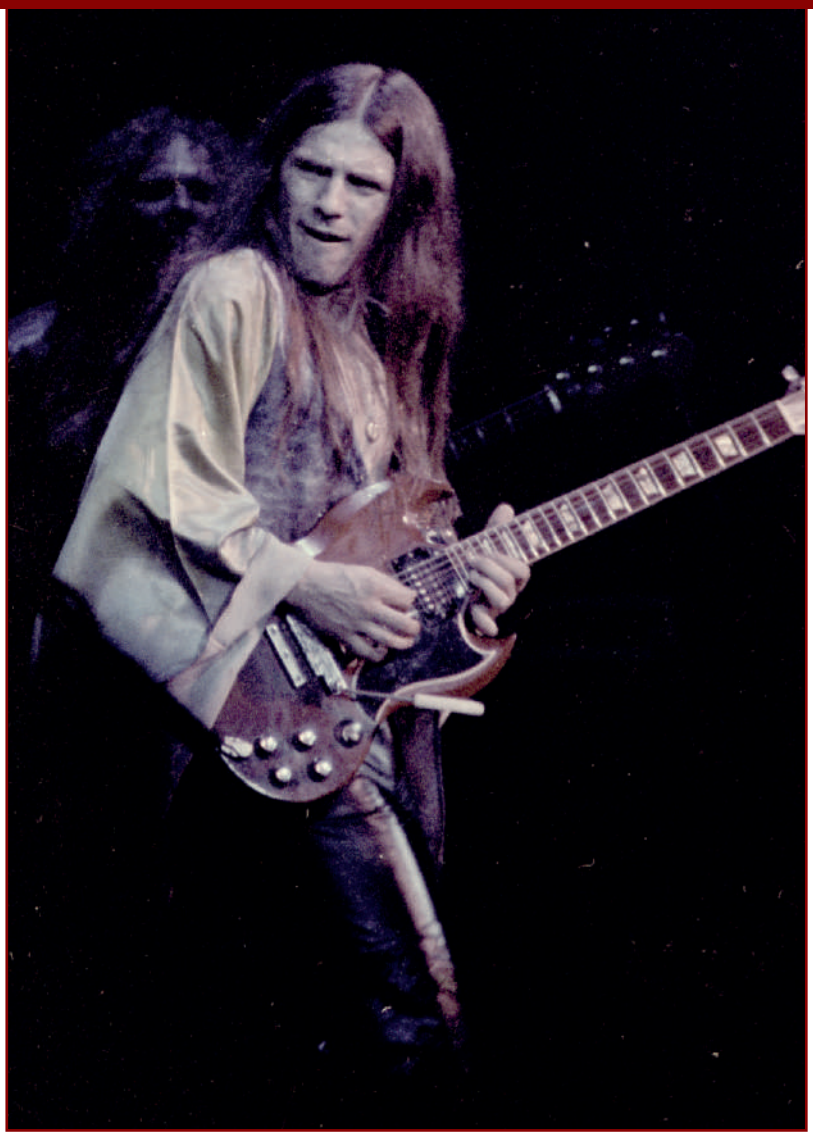
"When I worked with Queen it was the worst tour of my life, because the band and crew put me through hell. But that isn't my abiding memory of the overall experience. I thought Queen's music was pretty good, so I watched them the first night and thought, 'Wow that's really cool.' Then on night two I watched again and thought, 'That's really cool, but I think I saw it before.' Then on night three I thought, 'It's not just the music that's the same. Didn't he wipe his face and take

# FRANK MARINO

a drink of water at *exactly* the same time as he did last night? And the night before?' I did 40 gigs with Queen and pretty soon I was like, 'OK, here comes the towel...' It was all scripted, and I don't live scripted... I just don't do that. I don't think about anything that way in *life*, not just in music. Ambition is the killer of creativity, because you can't become creative if you've already got 'a plan'.

"When I'm playing in a band it's a jam band and we invent as we go along, the way a lot of jazz guys do it. If you're in a band like that, then the most important thing you can do is *listen* to the other guy and never to yourself. That's the key. The other musician becomes the source of where you're going to go and you'll invent as you go. And if you can get three, four, or five guys together all expressing from the same source, then you're going to have some pretty cool music and you're never going to do exactly the same thing on two different nights.

"Creativity is the art of bringing out something that even you didn't know was going to happen. Creativity isn't going to Ikea and buying a shelf and fitting it together using the instructions. It's about cutting the wood yourself and fitting it together and not having instructions. That's creativity."



"HENDRIX CAME OUT TO PLAY WEARING RED PANTS. I DON'T THINK I'D EVER SEEN ANYONE WEARING RED PANTS BEFORE. BUT ONCE THE BAND STARTED I COULDN'T HEAR THE DRUMMER. ALL I COULD HEAR WAS A BUNCH OF NOISE, THIS WAAAH WAAAH WAAAH SOUND. I DIDN'T LIKE IT, SO I DECIDED TO LEAVE AND GO HOME."

**THERE IS** one much-related story that's been trotted out for years to explain where Frank's creativity heralds from. But it's a story that drives him mad to this day.

"Originally I was a drummer," he tells me. "I started around the age of five, because I'd seen [American jazz legend] Buddy Rich somewhere and he was like, 'Wow!' So any music that had Buddy Rich on, I tried to copy. My parents eventually got me a kit, but not a real kit, just three drums and a couple of cymbals. I couldn't really play it in the house, because we lived in a duplex and there were neighbours. So I'd take my drums to the corner of the street and bash them there.

"But when I was around the age of 13 or 14 a lot of kids were experimenting with drugs; marijuana, hash and LSD. Well basically I did too much and ended up in hospital. Now I'd taken drugs before The Big One and it had never done that to me and I can't tell you how awful the experience was. I wasn't in a hospital because I was feeling sick. I was in a hospital because I was literally crazy. My parents didn't know what to do with me. 'I guess he's sick. We'd better take him to a hospital.'

"I couldn't play guitar at the time," Frank confirms. "Having played drums I'd listened to a lot of music and I'd played with guitarists, of course. But when I went into the hospital – which was really a psychiatric ward for kids – suffering the effects of LSD I didn't know what I was doing and I was completely out of my mind. Now in that ward there were games, there was a piano, and there was a guitar." Frank picked up the guitar and immediately found salvation in it.

"Playing the guitar was like falling into the ocean and finding a piece of wood that you hang onto for dear life until someone rescues you," he explains. "Weird things were happening to me to the point where I was always trying to figure out how I could be dreaming when I wasn't even sleeping. I was literally living in terror. That's because the things I was experiencing felt so real. Before that I'd smoked dope. You laughed and you wanted to eat buttered toast – and everyone thought it was funny. Maybe you dropped acid and you thought the walls were kinda sweating or moving a little bit. People who've done it will know what I'm talking about here. But when this... this *thing* happened to me, when my mind got blown, I believed those things were no longer just happening in my head. They were actually around me in real physical form. Like I said, it was terrifying. It was like living in an *Alice In Wonderland* story. Eventually you say

Photos: Getty Images/Bill Tompkins; Getty Images/Chris Walter/WireImage

Mahogany Rush shot in 1978. L-R: Paul Harwood (bass), Jimmy Ayoub (drums), Frank Marino (guitar and vocals)

you want to go home. It's like Dorothy in *The Wizard Of Oz*. 'What is this place? How did I get here?' Plus what you have to remember is that this was the '60s. They really didn't know what was going on with this stuff. I mean, LSD was being used by the CIA back then. At one point it was even legal!

"So I went through all this and the only thing I could grab onto that had any semblance of reality was playing an instrument – in this case a guitar – and trying to invent musical interludes and songs. So I'd sit and play the guitar for 12 hours a day. I'd hold on to this guitar every second. I'd bang on it or play on it, and when I came out of the hospital I wanted to take it with me, but it belonged to the hospital. They wouldn't let me take it. I was in and out of the hospital a few times and in the end my mother said, 'Well, since it helps Frankie, let's get him a guitar.' So then when I was at home I sat playing my guitar all day long, all day long, all day long. When I went back to the hospital I played *their* guitar and when I came home I played *my* guitar. And that's how I became a guitar player.

"Now people say, 'Frank went to a hospital and he came out playing guitar like Jimi Hendrix, because he was visited by the spirit of Hendrix. But that was all so stupid. How could that even happen? I went to the hospital in 1968 and Jimi died in September of 1970. If his spirit visited me in 1968, then what was going on with Jimi at that time? He was still alive. Chronologically-speaking it's an impossible story that was invented by a writer for a local newspaper. And I tried so hard to refute that statement right from the very beginning.

"Given my state of mind it was only natural that I played the kind of music that was somehow fitting for the world I was living in. At the time Jimi Hendrix was the thing. 'Are You Experienced?', '3rd Stone From The Sun', 'I Don't Live Today', '1983... (A Merman I Should Turn To Be)', the more psychedelic stuff. Not 'Foxy Lady' and 'Purple Haze'. That was the model for expressing the state of mind that I was in. But I also loved John Cipollina from Quicksilver Messenger Service, so I played that. I loved Johnny Winter because I loved the blues, so I played that. I loved Carlos Santana. I loved The Doors, which wasn't even a guitar band, but I liked what Robby Krieger did, so I played that. I played Beatles, lots of Beatles, probably more Beatles than anything."

**SO IT** wasn't all about Hendrix, no matter what anyone else said. And Frank believes this 'reincarnation of Jimi' nonsense was a kind of karma payback for something that happened to him in early '68, the year he ended up in hospital.

"Jimi played in Montreal early that year and I went along primarily to see [Robert Wyatt] the drummer from Soft Machine, who were opening the show. Well, he did his drum solo and I was happy as hell, but stuck around for Hendrix because I thought [the band's drummer] Mitch Mitchell was fantastic too. He's one of my favourite drummers to this day. So Hendrix came out to play wearing red pants. I don't think I'd ever seen anyone wearing red pants before. But once the band started I couldn't hear the drummer. All I could hear was a bunch of noise, this waaah waaah waaah sound. I

# FRANK MARINO

"ALL I WANTED WAS THE RESPECT OF MY PEERS, BUT I DIDN'T FEEL THAT THEY RESPECTED ME OR LIKED ME. AND WHEN I DID GET SOMEONE I RESPECTED COME TALK TO ME, SOMEONE LIKE JOHNNY WINTER, WELL I FELT THAT WAS *IT*. YOU CAN KEEP THE MONEY!"

didn't like it, so I decided to leave and go home, even though everyone else was inside watching this Jimi Hendrix guy. Later on when I became so affiliated with that name it was like he was saying to me, 'I'll make sure you never forget my name for walking out on me!'"

Whether or not Hendrix really did jinx Frank in some spooky way, Marino's LSD-induced obsession with playing guitar soon attracted interest.

"When I was home playing guitar for 12 hours at a time people would start gathering around in huge crowds to watch me," Frank remembers. "Some people noticed that and said, 'Let's bring some people from America who have a record company to see this kid.' I was playing in a cornfield with maybe 1000 people there and they wanted to sign me. So my parents signed for me on my first record deal. It was like, 'You mean Frankie's going to be on these black vinyl things? OK sure. Where do I sign?' Little did we know that these people were going to take most of the money. We weren't a family that had money, so we didn't give too much of a crap, really. Plus my parents thought it would help me with my illness. 'Hey Frankie, they're going to give you some money to do what you like to do. You're going to feel better. You're not gonna be scared any more.'"

Working with bassist Paul Harwood, drummer Jimmy Ayoub, pianist Phil Bech, and organist Johnny McDiarmid, Frank's first deal was with Kotai, which quickly merged with a Detroit label called Nine Records.

"By now I'd called my band Mahogany Rush," he tells me. "It was because the doctors at the hospital had asked me to describe what I was feeling and seeing when I was there. I told them that I was having a mahogany rush. They asked me to explain what that meant and I said, 'I don't know, but it feels like I'm becoming a tree and I feel like wood.' So when I first got together with friends to play they asked me what music I did and I said, 'I do mahogany rush music.'"

**THE BAND'S** first album, 'Maxoom', was released in October of 1972 when Frank was an improbably young 17 years old. It can't be denied that his "terrifying" LSD experience became a major influence on his work.

"'Maxoom' was a word that came from trying to describe what I was experiencing," he confirms. "It was a word, a thing I used to hear that would come at me from the sky. It would come at me and I'd start feeling like wood. If you look at all of my early work, particularly the covers, you can see all that stuff is there. I tried to tell the artist what I'd seen and he'd try to draw it in felt pen – and we ended up with these insane covers like [1974's] 'Child Of The Novelty' and [1975's] 'Strange Universe'. The artist could never really get it right, though. It was more like a cartoon impression and I'd be like, 'Yeah, yeah. That's *sort of* it.' But it was like describing a guy to the police when they're trying to do a photo-fit. I was living in a certain reality, but I was trying to get back to the reality of the world."

I ask Frank whether it genuinely felt as if he existed in two parallel universes at one and the same time back then.

"Look," he says. "If you see a photograph you think you know what you're looking at. But you could take a pen and trace over the geometry of the lines on the photo and draw another image on it. You could create another image there. Well that's how your mind does these things. It creates another image that you *think* is real, and then you have to learn to ignore it, to understand that it's not true and that it's an illusion. But there's a symbiosis in how the worlds interconnect." He goes on...

"LSD isn't just about what you see. It's about what you hear, feel, taste, and smell. It's about *all* your senses. Probably the easiest way to describe is it is by thinking about hearing. You don't *hear* the blood in your ears, but it's there, moving and pulsing. The brain simply tunes it out. But what if it didn't? You'd hear that blood pulsing all the time, ba-boom, ba-boom, ba-boom. Now if you become aware of that because you're not tuning it out mentally, then your mind is going to think, 'What the heck is that noise? Why the hell are bombs going off?' You'll invent a picture for it. And that then becomes part of something you think you're seeing. This is what these psychedelic drugs do. They make you very aware of things you're not supposed to be aware of. And you misinterpret them as little mental stories, which is exactly how you dream. So you're living awake, but you're dreaming at the same time, and you're inventing ridiculous stories awake the way you do when you dream. 'I was flying' or 'My ant was playing bass', something that would never happen. Well my mind was doing that all the time."

**GIVEN THE** rise of the late-'60s counter-culture and the emergence of guitar rock as the young person's music of choice in the early '70s, you would have thought that Frank Marino's mix of solo-heavy songs and drug-influenced thinking would have hit the sweetest of sweet spots among his contemporaries. But not according to Frank...

> "I DON'T THINK I GET PLEASURE OUT OF OTHER PEOPLE LIKING WHAT I DO. BUT I AM GRATEFUL FOR IT. GRATEFUL IS A PLEASING FEELING TO EXPERIENCE, BUT IT'S NOT THE NORMAL KIND OF PLEASURE WE EXPERIENCE. IT'S NOT AS SENSUAL."

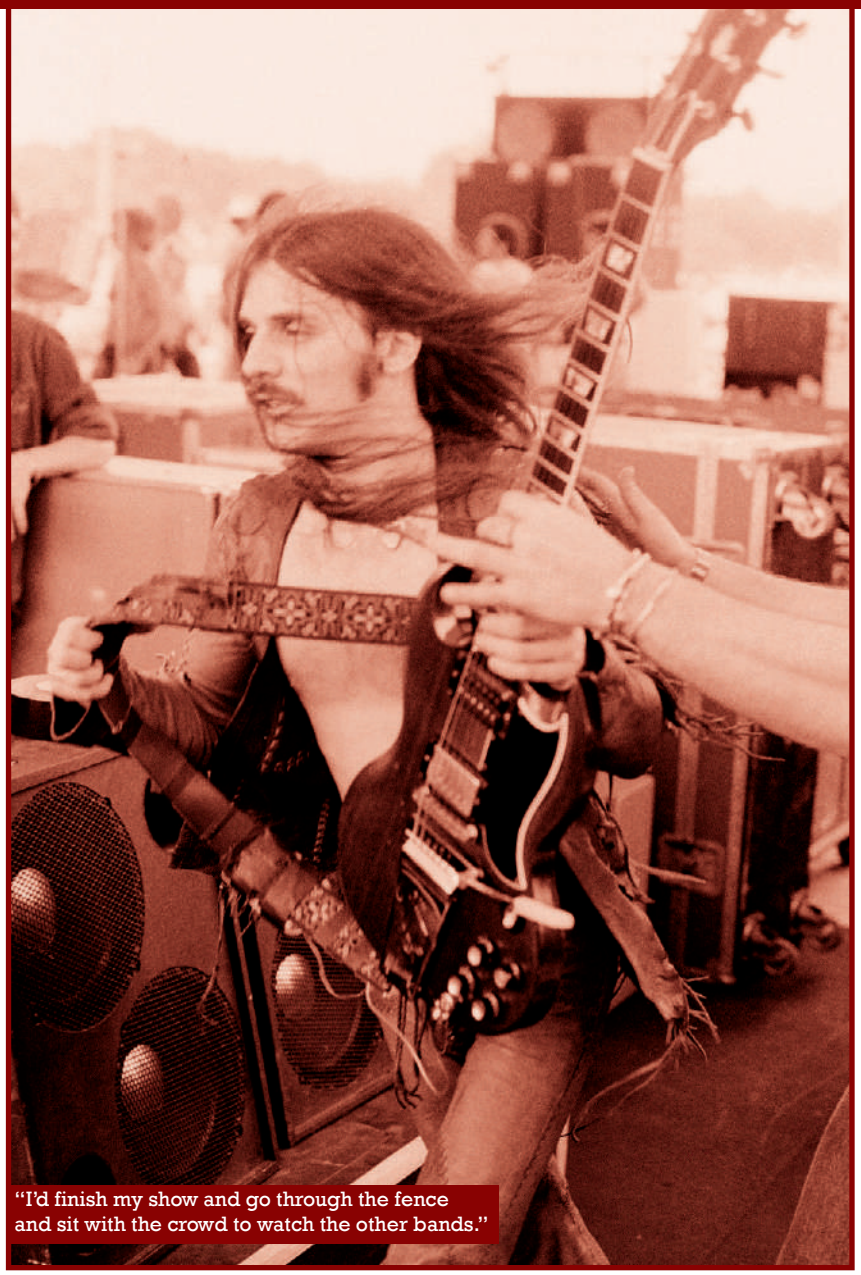
"When I was finally put into the system of rock'n'roll and was touring with all these bands, I quickly found that I was an outcast. There were two reasons for that. The first one was these bullsh*t Jimi Hendrix stories, which made people think I was some kind of copycat. They were very angry about that. I'd become known pretty quickly, but nobody from *Creem* magazine or *Circus* magazine had talked to me. So all they had was that stupid stuff that had been written in the local newspapers. They picked up on that and got it totally wrong, thinking it was what I'd actually said. As early as 1971 when I was finally able to meet people who were writing about music I said, 'No, look. I play Hendrix because I like his music, but I play other stuff too. I play Grateful Dead songs and Quicksilver Messenger stuff. Why are you picking up on Hendrix?' So they talked about my hospital experiences and how it had happened that I learnt to play guitar like Hendrix there. I said, 'I don't really know how that happened, but it has nothing to do with spirits. What you're saying is ridiculous. I like Hendrix's music. I do. I think it's the way to play an electric guitar. I think that to this day, but I did it for fun, that's all.' All that Hendrix stuff got so hard on me that by the second album, 'Child Of The Novelty', I decided to address the issue in the title song. '*He was a child of the novelty/He took 'em by surprise/He made them feel that he was real/And worked magic before their eyes*.' It's tongue in cheek. I hate to be crass, but those words ►

Photo: Getty Images/Richard McCaffrey/Michael Ochs Archive

# FRANK MARINO

are going, 'Look at how stupid people are to believe this stuff. Are they crazy? It's impossible.'

"So that was the first reason why there was this whole standoffishness toward me from other musicians. The other reason was that I was very much *not* a participant in the hedonistic lifestyle that was around at the time. After what had happened to me... people might think I did drugs and drink. Well I haven't had a drink or a drug since I was 13 – and I'm 65 this week! So I kept to myself. I wasn't gonna go smoke dope with those guys, I wasn't going to go to drinking parties with them. I was afraid to. So I was an oddball guy spending most of my time alone in the '70s. I wasn't running around meeting Jimmy Page every day. That wasn't my life. My band members knew exactly how I was, because they lived with me. They knew I was insane. 'That's Frank. Frank will sit in the chair all day and play guitar from noon until midnight.' But they were fine with that and they went to the parties and had fun. And I had no problem with that. What you have to understand is, I didn't separate myself off from anyone. They separated themselves from me. I wanted to talk to everyone. All I wanted was the respect of my peers, but I didn't feel that they respected me or liked me. And when I did get someone I respected come talk to me, someone like Johnny Winter, well I felt that was *it*. You can keep the money!"



"I'd finish my show and go through the fence and sit with the crowd to watch the other bands."

"I DON'T LIVE SCRIPTED… I JUST DON'T DO THAT. I DON'T THINK ABOUT ANYTHING THAT WAY IN *LIFE*, NOT JUST IN MUSIC. AMBITION IS THE KILLER OF CREATIVITY, BECAUSE YOU CAN'T BECOME CREATIVE IF YOU'VE ALREADY GOT 'A PLAN'."

**FRANK NEVER** had any time for all those rock star egos and games. He still doesn't.

"Y'know, back in the '70s I wasn't always headlining shows," he admits. "I was often opening at festivals or arena gigs. So I'd finish my show and go through the fence and sit with the crowd to watch the other bands. People said, 'You can't let people see you're just like them, because then they won't look up to you.' I said, 'So what? Why is that important to you? I'm just lucky to be here. The people like what I do and that's great, but I'm not doing it for that. I'm doing it because I like it. So I'm not going to cut myself off from people because you think I should act differently.' I saw all this giant hypocrisy from these artists and industry people and a lot of the time they were just *acting*."

So maybe that's why you never seemed fully committed to the rock star thing...

"I had no ambition, and I think that helped me as a person and it also helped my music. When you have ambition, when you try to set up your life based on a plan... well plans *fail*. And when things fail you set yourself up for a great disappointment. When things go wrong you'll run around trying to fix it. But you can't put toothpaste back in the tube. It is what it is and so you deal with it as it comes. And if you live that way, then you'll find that you're very grateful for the most important things, which is the people around you whom you love and who love you – and if you happen to have a dog it's even better!

"When your dog looks at you, the thing you love so much about the way they look at you is the complete absence of guile and scheming. We tend to think we are what we can make ourselves. So I'm not just Frank, I'm Frank the guitarist. You're not just Howard, you're Howard the writer. But actually I'm just Frank and you're just Howard. If you don't try to be ambitious, to scheme and plan, then you'll have an absence of guile just like your dog does.

Photo: Getty Images/Michael Putland

"You have the goodness of what God is. When you do good works it's not your gift to God, but it's God's gift to you. You're the radio receiver rather than the transmitter. Listen, if I write a song and I get an idea, where does that idea come from? That song comes from a source. I didn't really write it, I just express it.

"People often ask me if I ever go into 'the zone' when I'm playing. Oh yes, I go into the zone. But when they say that, they're talking about the imagination point. I'm a theologian. I teach theology. And people say to me that the Bible is an interpretation of this and that. No. The Bible is inspired by God, but it's expressed by men. Maths is something else I love, because it's so objectively true. The multiplication table is true whether I believe it or not. The ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter, pi, is true whether I believe it or not. But mathematicians don't *invent* mathematical formulas. They *discover* them. And for them to discover things it must mean that those things were there before. The idea was already there. So we discover something and then we interpret it to our fellow man as best we can with our limited instruments. But we're really simply expressing a truth, and when musicians go into a zone they're going to a place that can't be described or quantified. The only way to express it is at the moment when they sing a song a certain way or they play it on an instrument a certain way. And the best way to do that is simply to get out of the way. To get your personality out of the way, because your ego will stop you expressing what you're trying to express. So you see, there's nothing one man can do that another man can't."

Really? I don't think I could ever play guitar the way you do Frank...

"You can do what I can do, sure. The difference between you getting there and not getting there is the *want*. Many people *would like* to do something. But when you *want*, then you do something about it. You go play and you go practise. If you *want* to do something then you will do it. If you *would like* to do something you *might* do it. There's a difference."

Frank claims that he didn't particularly want to play guitar, but that he really wanted to "come home from a weird world – and that was the tool I used to get there. Even after all that I went through, and after all this time, the guitar isn't important to me. *Music* is important to me. But I can't read tab or sheet music. When I see that I don't know what I'm looking at. It's totally confusing. I could never do anything with that. So if you said to me, 'Frank, I want you to learn such and such a tune,' and it's a tune I've never played by some jazz guy, then the only way I can do it is to listen to the tune enough so eventually I know it in my mind the way I know 'Happy Birthday'. Then I'll pick up my instrument and it will just happen. But I have to get it into my head first before it can even begin to get to my hand."

**I ASK** Frank whether he gets pleasure out of other people appreciating his craft.

"I don't think I get pleasure out of other people liking what I do," he answers. "But I am grateful for it. Grateful is a pleasing feeling to experience, but it's not the normal kind of pleasure we experience. It's not as sensual. I guess the easiest way of explaining it is to say that I'm grateful when people are pleased with what I do, but I'm not ungrateful if they're not.

"There's something you hear musicians saying at almost every show, particularly big shows. They will say, 'Oh, the crowd sucked. The crowd was terrible.' It's as if the crowd is some kind of a monolithic creature that has a personality and that you can say bad things about. But it's so ridiculous to say that, particularly about the very people who've come to support you. It's the height of selfishness to react like that just because they didn't like you. It's insane, literally sociopathic. What has that got to do with anything? You should simply be grateful to be where you are and grateful if they like you. But if they don't happen to like you, then you really shouldn't be ungrateful.

"Here's how I feel about it. If you're playing in a band and you get to be playing a 20,000-seater arena, then the likelihood is that there's only one genius in the band, only one Stevie Wonder or one Elton John. So if you're the guitarist or the bass player in the group and for some reason you can't finish the show, there are probably 2000 people in the audience who could come down and take your place. You couldn't ask someone to come down and replace Stevie, but you could find a guitarist without much trouble. What I'm saying is that we're all so lucky to be there on the stage, so why do we wander around thinking we're so special? We're not curing cancer, we're not saving the world. We're just lucky to be there.

"In football and hockey you're not going to have lots of people in the crowd who can do what the guys on the pitch are doing. You probably won't find one person. In music, my friend, you probably can. So we have to remember that musicians were once the minstrels who were hidden from view, playing behind the curtain simply to accompany the king eating his sumptuous meal. We can't forget that we were pretty much the dregs of society in many cultures and few of us were lauded as being something special. But because of the explosion of rock'n'roll in the '70s and the invention of laser lights and flash bombs, suddenly we're saving the world? We're really not saving the world. In 100 years' time our own great-grandchildren won't remember our name – and that's our own direct offspring. So really, we're not that important. Like I said, I'm just lucky to be here. And I'm only doing this because I like it."

Which seems to be just about the most straightforward appraisal any rock musician can give of his achievements. God bless Frank Marino, rock's honest broker...

The Black Crowes line-up that recorded 'Shake Your Money Maker'. L-R: Jeff Cease (guitar), Chris Robinson (vocals), Rich Robinson (guitar), Steve Gorman (drums), Johnny Colt (bass)

# THE BLACK CROWES

## 'SHAKE YOUR MONEY MAKER'

## DATELINE: FEBRUARY 1990

THE DEBUT ALBUM FROM THE GEORGIA FIVE PIECE MARKED THE END OF HAIR METAL AND A RETURN TO A ROOTSIER, MORE EMOTIONAL ROCK. DOES IT STILL RESONATE 30 YEARS LATER?

**THE BLACK CROWES**
'Shake Your Money Maker'
(Def American)
Released: February 1990

**LINE UP**
**CHRIS ROBINSON** – lead vocals
**RICH ROBINSON** – guitar, backing vocals
**JEFF CEASE** – guitar
**JOHNNY COLT** – bass
**STEVE GORMAN** – drums, percussion

**PRODUCED BY**
George Drakoulias

**RECORDED AT**
Soundscape Studios, Atlanta; Chapel Studios, Paramount Studios, Grandmaster Studios, Los Angeles

**TRACK LISTING**
**Twice As Hard** (Chris Robinson, Rich Robinson)
**Jealous Again** (Chris Robinson, Rich Robinson)
**Sister Luck** (Chris Robinson, Rich Robinson)
**Could I've Been So Blind** (Chris Robinson, Rich Robinson)
**Seeing Things** (Chris Robinson, Rich Robinson)
**Hard To Handle** (Otis Redding, Alvertis Isbell, Allen Jones)
**Thick N' Thin** (Chris Robinson, Rich Robinson)
**She Talks To Angels** (Chris Robinson, Rich Robinson)
**Struttin' Blues** (Chris Robinson, Rich Robinson)
**Stare It Cold** (Chris Robinson, Rich Robinson)

**CHRIS ROBINSON ON 'SHAKE YOUR MONEY MAKER':** "It's funny. Through all the trajectory of the good and the bad, the joy and the frustrations, Rich and I were laughing, saying the one thing we can always agree on is, 'Shake Your Money Maker' is a good record."

**IT'S STRANGE TO THINK** that 'Shake Your Money Maker', The Black Crowes' retro nod to rock'n'roll's days of yore, is now older than the albums and bands it paid homage to were on its release back in 1990. But it's no surprise that the Robinson brothers, recently back together and not as battle-weary as they once were, have chosen the songs of 'Shake Your Money Maker' as the centrepiece and selling point for their reunion tour. After all, it's a record that the Georgia quintet never again quite matched for its clarity of purpose, purity of vision, and commercial sales.

**CUT BACK** to the early months of 1990, around the time The Black Crowes were to release 'Shake...' There was a show at the Roxy in LA, that lovely theatre on Sunset Boulevard with the somewhat debauched bar just above it where former Hollywood madam Heidi Fleiss organised parties. That night the place was like a little outpost of London. British music hacks and liggers abounded, flown in to build the buzz, alongside LA music royalty: David Lee Roth, Rick Rubin, Slash, Steven Adler... The Crowes were already The Next Big Thing, signed to Rubin's Def American label and managed by Pete Angelus, one wise-cracking half of the 'Picasso Brothers'. The other brother? Diamond Dave, another Angelus client.

It wasn't a night to blow it, and the band proved themselves up to the task. What the Crowes possessed couldn't be faked or copied. They had a bunch of songs better than anything the Stones had come up with in years and the chops to deliver them, both live and on record. And in the last days of the Empire Of Hair, when every second group through the door was a Warrant or Poison wannabe, here was a band deeply in love with the music rather than the lifestyle.

Chris Robinson performing on *Saturday Night Live*, 16 March 1991

THE ZERO-F*CKS-GIVEN SWAGGER WAS JUSTIFIED. THE MAINSTREAM PRESS MIGHT HAVE SNIFFED AT THE RECORD, BUT 'SHAKE YOUR MONEY MAKER' WAS IMMEDIATELY TAKEN TO HEART BY THE FANS.

**AT THE** centre were the Robinson boys. Vocalist Chris was tall and rock star skinny, with a big Rod The Mod beak of a nose and a voice that sat somewhere between Stewart and Paul Rodgers. Taciturn guitar-playing brother Rich was the writer of the riffs behind 'Twice As Hard' and 'Jealous Again', the classic one-two punch that began 'Shake Your Money Maker'.

Chris wasn't afraid to shoot from the hip. As soon as 'Shake Your Money Maker' was released his band was picked to open for ZZ Top, a prime support slot many acts would kill for. However, the Crowes were quickly booted off for Chris's negative comments about sponsors Miller Beer. But the zero-f*cks-given swagger was justified. The mainstream press might have sniffed at the record, but 'Shake Your Money Maker' was immediately taken to heart by the fans.

**THERE ARE** two terrific ballads on the record, 'She Talks To Angels' and 'Seeing Things', both beautifully shaded by veteran player Chuck Leavell's piano and organ. But there's also the smoky 'Sister Luck', which allows Chris to cut loose, as well as a rootsy cover of Otis Redding's 'Hard To Handle', which sounds more cynical now than it did back then. The Crowes used it both as a calling card and as a battering ram to open up the *Billboard* rock charts, but the record would hit just as hard without it.

'Shake...' was succinct, too, with none of the muso excesses that soon began to mark the band's work. 'Could I've Been So Blind', 'Stare It Cold' and 'Thick N' Thin' were simple, bold ideas. As soon as the fame and money hit, the band indulged Chris's Grateful Dead fantasies and The Black Crowes sound became fuller, muddier, often harder to follow; the simple brilliance of their tunes obscured in a haze of dope and hero worship.

**'SHAKE...' REMAINS** gloriously free of all of that and it's probably the reason why it's still their best-known, best-loved and biggest-selling record. It's not just for the hardcore fan. Much of that is due to the unsung contributions of a terrific rhythm section in bassist Johnny Colt and in particular Steve Gorman, a wonderfully unflashy drummer always on the very back of the beat, producing an easy, effortless groove from which the Robinsons could work.

Like most of the other big rock records of its era – 'Appetite For Destruction', 'Nevermind', Metallica's 'Black' album – 'Shake Your Money Maker' stands slightly apart from everything else. The classic sound that it adapted saved it from being lumped in with the rest, and with the passage of years, it still sounds exactly that: classic.

**JON HOTTEN**

## THE ORIGINAL REVIEWS

"The Black Crowes aren't merely trying to 'reinvent' the Faces' gin-soaked rock; instead, they manage to reinvest it with innocent fervour and a swaggering grace. 'Steel Wheels' is a good album and all, but *this* is how the Stones might sound today if Keith had spent his salad days banging steroids instead of smack."
**– Mark Coleman, *Rolling Stone*, 31 May 1990**

"The Black Crowes are to the early Rolling Stones what Christian Slater is to the young Jack Nicholson: a self-conscious imitation, but fine enough in its own right. Authentic bluesmen these Crowes will never be, but their sheer energy earns 'em the right to trash it up."
**– Dave Marsh, *Entertainment Weekly*, 23 January 1991**

**'SHAKE YOUR MONEY MAKER' FACT:** The album sold a million copies in its first 10 months of release in 1990. It remains the Crowes' most successful record commercially, with more than five million copies sold in the States alone.

Photos: Getty Images/Mick Hutson/Redferns; Getty Images/Alan Singer/NBCU Photo Bank/NBC Universal

# STRIKTLY FOR KONNOISSEURS

MONSTER ROCK ALBUMS FOR THOSE WHO NEED TO GO DEEPER

## NEW ENGLAND – 'New England'

**(INFINITY)**

## ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE – 1979

**LINE UP**
**JOHN FANNON** – GUITARS, VOCALS
**JIMMY WALDO** – KEYBOARDS, VOCALS
**HIRSH GARDNER** – DRUMS, VOCALS
**GARY SHEA** – BASS GUITAR

**NEW ENGLAND WERE ONE** of the most innovative pomp rock bands of the late-'70s/early-'80s music scene. Hailing from Boston, Massachusetts, band members John Fannon, Hirsh Gardner, Jimmy Waldo and Gary Shea had previously played in bands such as Flash Pudding, Fatback and Target. After the demise of Target in 1975, guitarist and vocalist Fannon, and keyboardist Waldo, went on to work with singer Annie McLoone on her 1976 album. When that project fizzled out Fannon pulled drummer Gardner, Waldo and bassist Shea together to form the band that would become New England.

Honing their skills and songwriting abilities for over two years, the band's hard work paid off when they attracted the attention of Kiss's powerful Aucoin Management, which resulted in boss Bill Aucoin pitching up to see the four-piece rehearse and sign the group for management. With Aucoin onboard record labels quickly started to take notice. Arista and Infinity both wanted to sign the band and the latter label – a subsidiary of MCA Records – won the race for the members' signatures.

With management and label in place, the group settled on the name New England and began working on their debut album. Queen, Journey and Asia mentor Mike Stone was installed to produce, with Aucoin suggesting Kiss frontman Paul Stanley to work alongside him.

**'NEW ENGLAND'** was released in 1979 and sounded like an American heavy rock version of ELO, relying on Beatles influences and multiple spot-on harmonies. The album is awash with gloriously pompous music, but the pick of the bunch has to be 'Don't Ever Wanna Lose Ya', a sparkling Top 40 hit written by John Fannon about his fears for his wife's safety while she drove home one night in particularly appalling weather. Opener 'Hello, Hello, Hello' is another standout anthem, with banks of lush harmonies that wash over the listener, while 'Shall I Run Away' and 'Alone Tonight' also create maximum impact with their big orchestral sound.

Mike Stone must take much of the credit for the way 'New England' sounds; full and warm and inviting. You can draw sonic comparisons with his work with Queen here for sure. Quite what Paul Stanley brought to the production table is anybody's guess, but the Kiss connection helped New England bag the opening slot on Kiss's 'Dynasty' tour in 1979 to support the album.

**THIS COVETED** support slot and the initial success of 'Don't Ever Wanna Lose Ya' seemed to set the band up perfectly for ongoing success, but sadly that never happened. Two further albums, 1980's 'Explorer Suite' and 1981's 'Walking Wild', came and went without creating the same fuss as the debut and New England split in 1982, with bassist Gary Shea and keyboardist Jimmy Waldo subsequently hooking up with Graham Bonnet and Yngwie Malmsteen in Alcatrazz. Happily, though, the original New England line-up got back together in the noughties and there's even talk of new music in the near future. We at *Rock Candy Mag* are delighted to herald the return of a classic band.

**Rob Evans**

# MANFRED MANN'S EARTH BAND – 'Messin'' (VERTIGO)

## ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE – 1973

**LINE UP**
**MANFRED MANN** – SYNTHESIZER, ORGAN
**MICK ROGERS** – GUITAR, VOCALS
**COLIN PATTENDEN** – BASS
**CHRIS SLADE** – DRUMS

**SOUTH AFRICAN JAZZ PIANIST** Manfred Mann – real name Manfred Sepse Lubowitz – was never short on confidence. After taking on his home country's state machinery as an anti-apartheid campaigner in his teens, he fled to the UK in 1961 where he formed three successive outfits bearing his own name.

Questions must surely have been asked when Mann broke up his phenomenally successful pop singles outfit, Manfred Mann, in 1969. But he was determined to form Manfred Mann Chapter Three, a heavy-duty progressive jazz act with dubious commercial prospects. Unsurprisingly they bombed, although it's still worth a rummage in your parents' attic as both their Vertigo albums now fetch several hundred pounds from collectors.

**MANFRED MANN'S** Earth Band formed in 1971 and their leader made a conscious decision to move in a more commercial direction. The band's excellent eponymous debut in 1972 made some impression in America, but was roundly ignored at home. The same was true of its successor, 'Glorified Magnified', which is actually a superb heavy rock record.

At this time bands like Uriah Heep, Rush and Kansas were all searching for that elusive sweet spot between prog rock and heavy metal, the two pre-eminent genres of the underground music scene. With 1973's 'Messin'', however, Manfred Mann's Earth Band nailed it, producing a work of stunning complexity and thrilling power.

**THE SLOW-BURNING** title track starts things off in epic style. It builds from a simple strummed guitar beginning, then moves through a gentle gospel flecked chorus, before ending on an explosive climax. But as good as that song is, the magnificent 'Buddah' quickly outdoes it. This track is everything a prog rock masterpiece should be. Gentle verses overlap with powerhouse guitar riffs delivered by Mick Rogers, before an anthemic chorus breaks out into a crazed synth solo.

There are other equally impressive – if simpler – moments here. 'Get Your Rocks Off' is an enjoyably rockier version of the Bob Dylan song. 'Black And Blue' slices up blues and metal to great effect, while the album closer is another cover, this time of Dr John's 'Mardi Gras Day', which nods back to the gospel vibe of the Earth Band's debut from the previous year.

**IN THE** wake of 'Messin'' Manfred Mann's Earth Band would plough a more straight-ahead prog rock furrow with enormous success. Music historians would have us believe that punk killed off this masterful period of music when bands could really play and albums were carefully constructed. The truth is that Manfred Mann's Earth Band achieved great success at the end of the '70s as a US stadium act, and consistently appeared on singles charts across the world, while punk bands were imploding at the very thought of a second album. Regardless of their later fame and success, 'Messin'' is not only the finest album Manfred Mann's Earth Band ever produced, it is also quite possibly the greatest prog rock record *ever*!

**Giles Hamilton**

Photos: Getty Images/Paul Natkin; Getty Images/Michael Putland

# ROCK CANDY REISSUES

THE VERY LATEST HOT RE-RELEASES FROM THE LABEL

## FASTWAY – 'Trick Or Treat'

**ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE – 1986**

**LINE UP**
**DAVE KING** – vocals
**'FAST' EDDIE CLARKE** – guitars
**SHANE CARROLL** – guitars
**PAUL REID** – bass
**CHARLIE MCCRACKEN** – bass
**ALAN CONNOR** – drums
**JERRY SHIRLEY** – drums
**PETE WILLIAMS** – Fairlight programming

**BACKGROUND**
Fastway roared out of the starting blocks with all cylinders firing back in 1983. Their eponymous debut album made a huge splash, particularly in North America, and signalled the band's arrival as major contenders in the world of hard rock. This was a particularly rewarding experience for founding member, guitarist 'Fast' Eddie Clarke, who'd recently left Motörhead in difficult circumstances.

Eddie was quick to move on, first enlisting bassist Pete Way, who'd experienced a similar feeling of isolation in UFO. Pete lasted about as long as a glass of beer in a drought, though, and it was the discovery of Irish vocalist Dave King that really paved the way for Fastway, a project that would convince many that traditional British rock was still a viable style. Despite the success of the debut Fastway album, though, subsequent records failed to capitalise on that early momentum.

'Trick Or Treat' was the band's fourth release and proved to be their swansong with Dave King as lead singer. King had already started working on other projects after Fastway's previous album, 1985's 'Waiting For The Roar', and was persuaded to come back for this particular project. 'Trick Or Treat' was effectively the soundtrack to a fairly successful heavy metal horror film of the same name. The album was issued in November 1986, a

month after the film's release. Most observers initially dismissed it as a desperate attempt by Fastway to hold on to a dwindling fan base. Amazingly, though, people were flabbergasted by the quality of the new tracks and its raw sound.

**WHAT GUITARIST 'FAST' EDDIE CLARKE SAID**
"My management were talking to the massive Dino De Laurentiis organisation. They were putting together a new movie and I was asked if Fastway would like to do the soundtrack. Dave [King] took a lot of persuading, but eventually I talked him round and he reluctantly agreed to do it. Even if it turned out to be successful, he was going to walk away from the band as soon as it was finished."

**TRACKS TO CHECK OUT**
Songs such as 'Get Tough', 'Stand Up' and 'Don't Stop The Fight' are high water marks in a career that should have seen Fastway become superstars, even after some career ups and downs. 'Trick Or Treat' also resurrected two earlier Fastway tracks, the magnificent 'Heft' and 'If You Could See'.

**MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK**
The Rock Candy CD is fully remastered and features a 12-page colour booklet with previously unseen photos, enhanced artwork and a 3,500-word essay by *Rock Candy Mag*'s Malcolm Dome.

**THE WORD FROM RC BOSS DEREK OLIVER**
"I assumed that 'Trick Or Treat' would be a sorry affair, a desperate move to extract a little more mileage from a fast fading group. The word on the street, however, was surprisingly upbeat for a project that by rights shouldn't have produced such stellar content. The album contains a number of raunchy recordings that hark back to Fastway's much-praised debut and their impressive second album, 1984's 'All Fired Up'. Third album 'Waiting For The Roar' was a much more melodic record, but 'Trick Or Treat' saw Fastway's original raw sound firmly back on track, allowing 'Fast' Eddie to rip it up and Dave King to deliver a vocal masterclass."

Photo: Julia Goode

# IF ONLY – 'No Bed Of Roses'

**ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE – 1992**

**LINE UP**
**TINA EGAN** – lead vocals
**JACKIE BODIMEAD** – lead vocals
**GREG HART** – guitar and keyboards
**NOBBY STYLES** – guitars
**JUDIT ARMSTRONG** – keyboards
**IAN EDWARDS** – bass guitar and keyboards
**ANDY ELPHICK** – drums

**BACKGROUND**
The trials and tribulations of British melodic rockers If Only may not have been up there with those of Fleetwood Mac, but they had their share of frustration and disappointment. If Only showed all the promise of an act that had supreme talent, and their brand of carefully crafted, yet highly energised melodic rock suggested the sky was the limit. It was a style created by talented musician Greg Hart, who would later form the widely applauded progressive art rock band Cats In Space. With If Only, though, Hart set about moulding a British unit that could stand shoulder to shoulder with the US leaders in the melodic field.

The initial breakthrough came when Hart recruited vocalist Jackie Bodimead, who'd already built a solid reputation in Girlschool and She, both well-respected all-female British hard rock bands. Jackie's voice lent the If Only material a world-class sheen that gave their rough-diamond songs an extra sparkle. Things then started to look even better when Yes and Asia keyboard player Geoff Downes signed If Only to his boutique label and set about producing their debut album. Unfortunately Bodimead then announced that she was leaving for personal reasons. Here was a promising band with a potentially bright career derailed through no fault of their own.

Fortunately a saviour was at hand in powerhouse singer Tina Egan, who stepped into Jackie's shoes, recorded new vocals and gave the project fresh life. However, musical times were changing in the early '90s, with the rough and raw sound of grunge leaving the melodic delicacies of If Only stranded. Still, time has only enhanced the band's music, and tracks by both singers on this reissue confirm that these recordings – no matter who's the vocalist – are buried treasure.

**WHAT GUITARIST AND KEYBOARDIST GREG HART SAYS**
"Jackie had a velvet smooth voice and she was amazing. Tina was very different. She was a real live wire, a larger than life, crazy girl... I think both versions [of the album] have strong merit, but in the end we split up because the band couldn't get anywhere. Some of the members gave up music completely, while I joined the tribute band circuit, which allowed me to carry on playing."

**TRACKS TO CHECK OUT**
Comparing both vocalists is a fascinating exercise, but it's the Tina Egan tracks that are the most arresting, suggesting immediate comparisons to Cher at her most magnificent. The likes of 'Loaded Gun', with its low-down swagger, and the panoramic AOR sheen of 'If Love Could Last Forever' identify the record as a hidden treasure trove of melodic goodness.

**MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK**
The Rock Candy CD is fully remastered and features 17 tracks of recordings with both vocalists. It has a 12-page colour booklet, enhanced artwork, new interviews and a 3,500-word essay by *Rock Candy Mag* editor at large Malcolm Dome.

**THE WORD FROM RC BOSS DEREK OLIVER**
"This If Only record was beset with problems from the very beginning, but while Greg Hart battled to keep hold of the reins and steer the project to success, the music industry deemed it too old school. A pity, as in another time and place 'No Bed Of Roses' could have launched If Only on a path to bigger things."

**Buy these albums and tons of other great releases at *www.rockcandyrecords.com***

# ROCK CANDY PICKS

THE STUFF THAT'S GRABBED OUR ATTENTION

## BAD COMPANY 'Desolation Angels'

**(RHINO)**

**WHAT'S THE STORY?**
'Desolation Angels' was released fully two years after Bad Company's fourth album, 1977's 'Burnin' Sky' – the first time the band had failed to put out a new album every year since their eponymous 1974 debut. The longer gestation period seemed to rejuvenate the group and 'Desolation Angels' proved to be a big hit, reaching number three in the States, where the album went platinum on the back of the giant radio hit 'Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy'. It eventually went on to sell over two million copies.

**WHAT FRONTMAN PAUL RODGERS SAYS**
"We took our time recording the album and the approach worked. We were rested and refreshed and that came across in the recordings. Everything about 'Desolation Angels', including the LP cover, shows a high level of care and attention."

**ANY EXTRAS?**
Plenty. The double CD features a remastered version of the original album, together with nine previously unreleased tracks taken from the original recording sessions. These include alternative takes of seven songs from the record and two outtakes, 'Smokin' 45' and 'Rock Fever', that don't feature on the original release. There's also a double vinyl version of this expanded reissue.

**HIGHLIGHTS**
This is definitely one of Bad Co's best albums. Each song is a winner, and the introduction of a synthesiser into the band's sound at this point in their career gave the overall mix a more contemporary feel. If you're looking for highlights in this new package you could do worse than head for 'Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy', where those synths really spice things up. Among the unreleased material, the alternative version of 'Oh, Atlanta' stands out; slower than the album version and with greater keyboard presence that only adds to the song's inherent drama.

**Malcolm Dome**

## NEW ENGLAND 'The New England Archives Box: Vol 1'

**(HNE RECORDINGS LTD)**

**WHAT'S THE STORY?**
US band New England produced a weird combination of pop, rock, pomp and prog music that somehow ended up sounding like ELO on steroids. Their first LP, which you can read about in this issue's *Striktly For Konnoisseurs* section, gained them some early traction. But after three albums the band split in early 1983, with keyboardist Jimmy Waldo and bassist Gary Shea going on to form Alcatrazz with Graham Bonnet. This somewhat disjointed five-CD box set features early demos and rough mixes from the first two albums, 'New England' and 'Explorer Suite', but nothing from third release 'Walking Wild'. Maybe there's a volume two coming. Nevertheless, there are a number of interesting additional demos and outtakes here.

**WHAT BASSIST GARY SHEA SAYS**
"We never wanted to be seen as at all formulaic and following an obvious musical path, so we mixed things up quite a lot. I think this gave us the edge over so many others who stuck rigidly to one approach. We were always very diverse."

**ANY EXTRAS?**
In a way everything is an extra, as none of this stuff has been on an official New England release. That said, a lot of the demos don't sound massively different to the finished tunes. Fans should focus on some great early songs like 'Candy' and 'Even When I'm Away' that never made the cut, and the 11 previously unheard tunes on disc five that show the direction the band was taking when they split.

**HIGHLIGHTS**
New England really did produce a hugely varied array of music and some previously unreleased material here best illustrates the breadth of their repertoire. 'I Let You Love Me' is a really interesting combination of prog and pop, 'Bite The Bullet' sounds like Deep Purple at their rollicking best, while 'Marlena' is pure ELO pop. Guitarist, vocalist and songwriter John Fannon is a real talent and the fact that he didn't get what he deserved shouldn't put you off checking out his work.

**Howard Johnson**

Photos: Getty Images/Fin Costello/Redferns; Getty Images/Hayley Madden/Redferns

# HARD TO HANDLE: The Life And Death Of The Black Crowes

## Steve Gorman with Steven Hyden (DA CAPO)

**WHAT'S THE STORY?**
Steve Gorman was the rock steady drummer in The Black Crowes. The man from Michigan marked his time with the sort of low-key dexterity exemplified by the Stones' Charlie Watts. But although the music and the band presented a carefree, almost bucolic image, in reality all was not in perfect harmony. With the passing of time the underlying, hate-filled relationship between the brothers Robinson was fully exposed for all to see.

**WHAT STEVE GORMAN SAYS**
"When the band called it a day for the first time in 2002, the primary cause of our internal misery was the constant battling between Chris and Rich Robinson. From the day I met them they fought. It's not like they got famous and then suddenly couldn't get along. They were never on the same page... it was exhausting."

**BEST BITS**
Tales of utter insanity constantly pepper the narrative leaving the reader open-mouthed. One of the most illuminating insights reveals why Jimmy Page abruptly backed out of his successful 1999/2000 concert pairing with The Black Crowes after a malicious assessment of their continued collaboration by Rich Robinson. When Gorman found out the full facts he was livid. Unlike the rest of the Crowes, playing with Jimmy was a childhood dream come true for him.

**DOES IT HIT THE SPOT?**
Yes – and how! Held together by sticking plasters and a seasoned manager who quickly became impervious to the Robinsons' antics, The Black Crowes initially concealed their inner turmoil until it became too obvious to hide both on and off stage. The beauty of this book is that Gorman isn't afraid to tell it like it actually was. This is no typically sanitised rock biography, protecting the perpetrators of misdeeds. Rather, it's a book that places you in the eye of the hurricane and gives you a clear view of an extraordinary catalogue of simmering resentments. The irony, of course, is that the recent cash-grab Black Crowes reformation is surely only adding to it. You will not be surprised to hear that this reformation doesn't feature Steve Gorman – or indeed any original band member other than the Robinsons.

**Derek Oliver**

# COME ON FEEL THE NOIZE Various Artists

**(CLEOPATRA)**

DVD

JIMMY PAGE / IAN GILLAN / OZZY OSBOURNE
NIKKI SIXX / JAMES HETFIELD
DEE SNIDER / MICHAEL MONROE
COME ON FEEL
THE NOIZE
THE STORY OF HOW ROCK BECAME METAL

**WHAT'S THE STORY?**
This 90-minute documentary directed by German Jörg Sonntag, explores the development of rock and metal first through the '70s and '80s, then onwards right up to the modern era. Of course it touches on the importance of many of the most iconic artists in the genre such as Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath and Deep Purple. But it also acknowledges the influence of glam and punk in the story. Among the many filmed interviews there are decent insights provided by Ozzy Osbourne, Ian Gillan, Dee Snider, James Hetfield, Michael Monroe and Nikki Sixx.

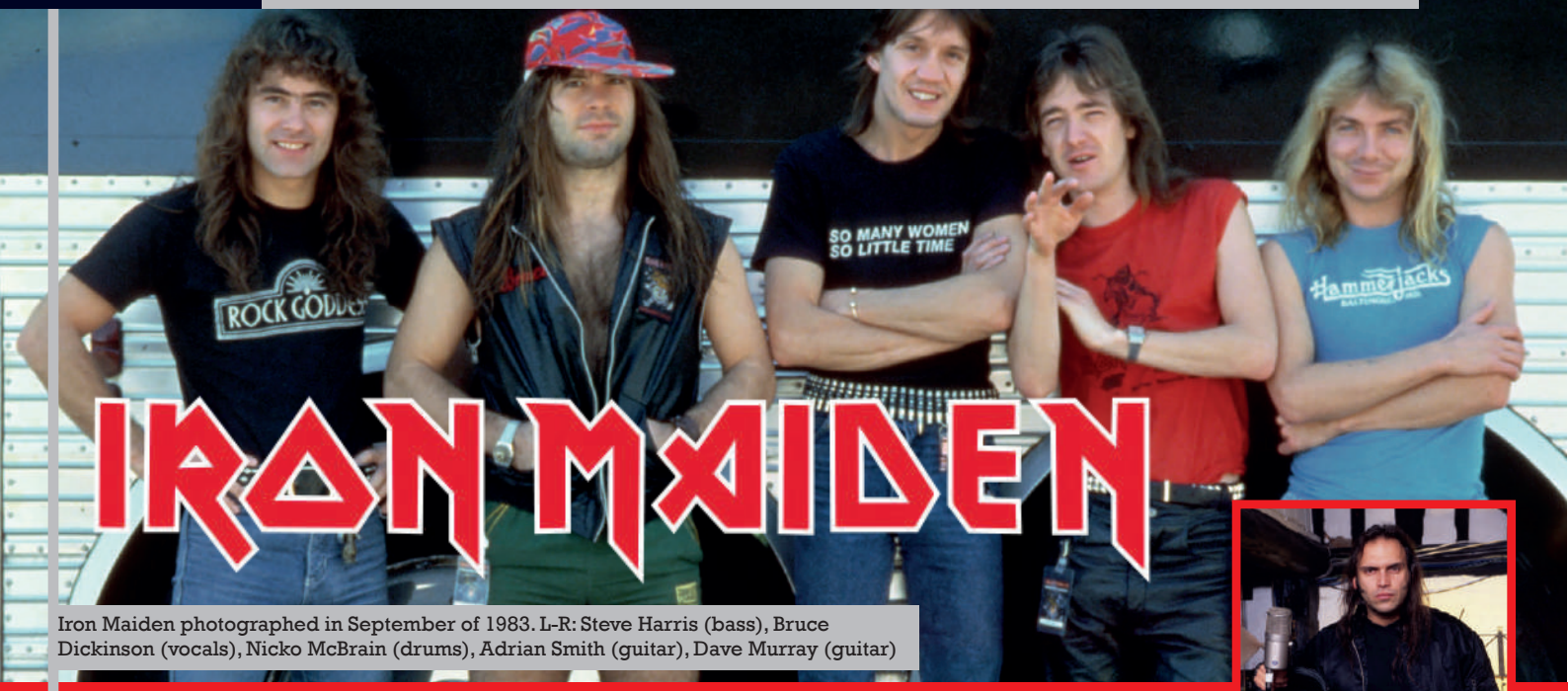
**WHAT OZZY SAYS**
"I never got my head round this term 'heavy metal'. We were just an angry, aggressive bunch of guys."

**ANY EXTRAS?**
Afraid not. This is only a one disc DVD, so what you get is simply the documentary, with no extra material. But in this day and age of endless extras you might find it refreshing that for once you aren't being asked to wade through a bunch of stuff that wasn't deemed good enough to include in the main event. Yer pays yer money, yer takes yer choice...

**HIGHLIGHTS**
It's great to see prime performances from bands such as Sabbath, Anthrax, Twisted Sister and Saxon included here, though surely the real gem of the package is a little known Motörhead TV performance of 'Orgasmatron', complete with Lemmy in corpse paint, singing and not playing bass! The power and charisma of live music in the '60s and early '70s is illustrated particularly well through footage from the influential German TV show *Beat Club*, some of which hasn't been seen for many years. And there are also worthwhile performances from glam titans including Roxy Music, T. Rex, Slade and The Sweet taken from another German TV show called *Musikladen*. Two complaints must be made, though. Firstly, the doc claims Saxon's 'Heavy Metal Thunder' was the first song to use the term 'heavy metal' in a title back in 1980. Well what about Todd Rundgren's 'Heavy Metal Kids' from 1974? Secondly, where on earth are AC/DC?

**Malcolm Dome**

# THE INSIDE TRACK




## IRON MAIDEN

Iron Maiden photographed in September of 1983. L-R: Steve Harris (bass), Bruce Dickinson (vocals), Nicko McBrain (drums), Adrian Smith (guitar), Dave Murray (guitar)

WHO COULD BE MORE PERFECTLY PLACED THAN VOCALIST **BLAZE BAYLEY** TO GIVE YOU THE SKINNY ON **IRON MAIDEN**'S MIGHTY CANON OF WORK? AFTER ALL, NOT ONLY IS HE A MASSIVE FAN, BUT HE ALSO RECORDED TWO ALBUMS WITH THE BAND…

**"THE FIRST TIME I** ever heard Iron Maiden was on UK radio back in 1982 when they played 'Run To The Hills'. I remember liking the song, but was more struck by the fact that the DJ seemed to be apologising for playing it. Britain may have been enjoying the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal at the time, but radio never really got behind the music.

"A year or two later I was working as a night porter in a hotel. A friend made me a tape of two Maiden albums. One side featured 'The Number Of The Beast', the other had 'Piece Of Mind' on it. When I was cleaning the hotel in the small hours I would listen to that tape endlessly. That's when I really got into Maiden. Not long after I saw that the band were going to play at the Birmingham Odeon, so I bought a ticket to see them on the 'World Slavery Tour' at the start of October 1984. From that moment on I was completely hooked.

"The power of Maiden's live show was incredible. They had aggression and they had attitude. It was a case of, 'You'd better be listening to us and you'd better be watching us, because otherwise we'll be after you.' Even though [lead singer] Bruce [Dickinson] had a stinking cold that night he was still full of energy and the guitars sounded perfect. I'd never heard anything like it before.

**"BY 1990** I was fronting my own band, Wolfsbane, and we were lucky enough to get the support slot on Maiden's 'No Prayer On The Road' tour. They were doing 21 theatre shows in the UK as a sort of 'back to the roots' thing and years later [Maiden bassist] Steve [Harris] told me we got the slot because we looked like we were fun, and because we had football in one of our videos. We were treated really well and it was probably the best tour I've ever done, because as the support band we had no pressure and could just go out there to thieve as many Maiden fans as we could.

"I watched Maiden from the side of the stage pretty much every night and would even join the band sometimes for 'Bring Your Daughter… To The Slaughter'. Bruce was very generous letting me share a stage with him, but I never dreamed I'd front the band myself one day. I honestly thought Wolfsbane would follow the same path as Maiden and end up at the top of the tree.

**"WHEN I** did join Maiden in 1994 it was an incredible feeling to be a member of a group that I was such a fan of. I think that gave me something a little different, because I looked at everything from a fan's point of view. Thinking about writing new material with people who were my heroes was less daunting in practice than I'd imagined. When I first got together with [guitarist] Janick [Gers] the ideas just flowed. And working with Steve was amazing. He gave me lots of great advice about how to improve a song and I soaked up everything and tried to learn as much as I could.

"The 'Man On The Edge' single from my first album with Maiden, [1995's] 'The X Factor' did really well worldwide and that felt incredible, especially when I thought about how I'd first heard Maiden back when I was cleaning hotels. I was immensely proud to be in the band and it was disappointing that I only got to make two albums [the second being 1998's 'Virtual XI'] with them. I thought we would do something great for a third record, but it wasn't to be. Still, Maiden have always treated me well and have always been fair with me.

"I'm still proud to be known as one of Iron Maiden's singers. If you listen to my 'Infinite Entanglement' trilogy of solo albums you'll hear a direct relation between what I learned doing 'The X Factor' and 'Virtual XI' and what I do now. I really found out how to sing and how to control my voice in Iron Maiden. But Maiden didn't only change my voice. It also changed my life!"

Blaze Bayley interview by Howard Johnson. Photos: Getty Images/Michael Monfort/Michael Ochs Archives; Getty Images/Mick Hutson/Redferns

## THE ALL-TIME CLASSIC – 'THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST' (1982)

"When I first heard 'The Number Of The Beast' I thought it had a very creepy vibe, which was something I'd never really heard before. Numbers like 'Hallowed Be Thy Name' and 'Children Of The Damned' created a real atmosphere and much of that was down to Bruce Dickinson's vocals. I found them really inspiring, and given that it was his first album with Maiden he did an amazing job.

"I first listened to 'The Number Of The Beast' on tiny, tinny speakers. But when I finally got to hear the album on a proper stereo it seemed to reveal a whole other realm of musical and vocal nuances. That was when I realised what a clever, classic album it is. And let's not forget that it also contains 'Run To The Hills', the first Maiden song I ever heard, so it will always have a special place in my heart."

## THE ONE FOR CONNOISSEURS – 'SEVENTH SON OF A SEVENTH SON' (1988)

"This album marked a definite change for Maiden, because it was where they started to expand their music and incorporate different colours and shades. I was all for them trying a concept album and enjoyed listening to the different sounds and effects that they brought in for this release. Maybe some hardcore Maiden fans prefer the band's earlier, more direct sound, which is why I've put it as a connoisseur's choice. But for me 'Seventh Son...' shows musicians who are maturing as songwriters. I also think this album features some of Bruce's greatest vocal performances ever. Each song seems to have an unexpected, unconventional twist and I really enjoyed singing the likes of 'The Clairvoyant' and 'The Evil That Men Do' when I was in Maiden myself. I've always loved burying myself deep in 'Seventh Son Of A Seventh Son' with the headphones on high and the lights down low."

## THE ONE TO AVOID – 'NO PRAYER FOR THE DYING' (1990)

"It's not as if there aren't any fine moments on 'No Prayer For The Dying'. I really like 'Bring Your Daughter... To The Slaughter', which is the band's only UK number one single to date, while another single, 'Holy Smoke', is also a great number. But I have to say that this album also contains some of my least favourite Iron Maiden songs. I'm afraid that 'Hooks In You' and 'The Assassin' leave me cold and uninspired, especially when I think how I felt about 'The Number Of The Beast' the first time I heard it. To be honest I don't particularly like the production on this album either. It feels like a step down from recordings the band had made previously. Maybe this all had something to do with the fact that things apparently weren't all rosy in the Maiden camp at this time, with Bruce getting more and more disillusioned. Whatever the reasons, this is a Maiden album I don't ever listen to."

## BEST DVD – *VISIONS OF THE BEAST* (2003)

"*Visions Of The Beast* contains every promo video the band made, from the first one ['Women In Uniform'] in 1980 all the way up to a couple of songs from the band's brilliant performance at the 'Rock In Rio' festival in 2001. I think it perfectly captures the vibe of the band during that early-to-mid-period of Maiden history. Watching it feels to me like stepping into a time machine as if you're some kind of Marty McFly going back to see a whole bunch of classic Iron Maiden performances spanning more than 20 years.

"Of course I'm also a big fan of *Visions Of The Beast* because I happen to be on it with a few of the tracks we recorded during the 'The X Factor' and 'Virtual XI' years! I'm still very proud of the videos we did for the likes of 'Man On The Edge' and 'Futureal'."

## THE RARITY – 'SANCTUARY' (SEVEN INCH VINYL SINGLE 1980)

"I've picked this item not so much for the music, which isn't particularly rare, but for the original single cover. The artwork features Maiden's mascot Eddie crouching over a figure lying on the floor. Eddie's holding a knife that's dripping with blood and the figure on the floor looks to have been caught pulling an Iron Maiden poster down. Those who know their UK politics will recognise the figure as Margaret Thatcher, the '70s and '80s Conservative party leader who earned herself the nickname 'The Iron Maiden' for her strong leadership. Eddie seems to have taken offence to Maggie pulling the poster down here. Some people were upset by the artwork at the time, others found it more tongue-in-cheek, but it's certainly something that's rare and collectible for Maiden fans. As an aside, 'Sanctuary' was definitely one of the most fun songs for me to sing in Maiden."

# THE INSIDE TRACK

## BLAZE BAYLEY'S IRON MAIDEN PLAYLIST

**'HALLOWED BE THY NAME' (from 'The Number Of The Beast', 1982)**

"The closing track from 'The Number Of The Beast' is simply an amazing way to finish an album. There are plenty of metal fans out there who consider 'Hallowed...' to be one of the greatest heavy metal songs of all time, and I can only agree with them. Bruce sounds like he's really living the story here. I particularly love the way the song ups the tempo as it heads towards its climax, and the section where Dave Murray and Adrian Smith enjoy some guitar harmonies is just brilliant."

**'WASTED YEARS' (from 'Somewhere In Time', 1986)**

"This is my absolute all-time favourite Iron Maiden song. Written by Adrian Smith, it deals with the trials and tribulations of a band on the road, the pressures of touring and spending a large amount of time away from loved ones. But all the same it's still trying to send a positive message about pushing forward and moving on from past troubles. This is a special song for me and I wish I'd had the opportunity of performing 'Wasted Years' live during my time with Maiden."

**'INFINITE DREAMS' (from 'Seventh Son Of A Seventh Son', 1988)**

"'Infinite Dreams' is a wonderful musical journey, a song that sees Maiden changing their traditional songwriting style and developing a new and exciting approach. With no conventional chorus, the song builds each section with both fantastic melodic passages and interesting lyrical content. This is a classic number and for me is a real centrepiece of the 'Seventh Son Of A Seventh Son' album."

**'SIGN OF THE CROSS' (from 'The X Factor', 1995)**

"The lyrics to 'Sign Of The Cross' were inspired by the novel *The Name Of The Rose* [by Umberto Eco], which was later turned into a movie starring Sean Connery and Christian Slater. It's a musically intense and emotional journey, a 'no compromise' song that I was proud to play a part in creating. I always loved performing it live on the 'The X Factour' and 'Virtual XI' tours, and it's definitely one of the most requested songs from Maiden fans at my solo shows."

Photos: Getty Images/Mick Hutson/Redferns; Getty Images/Brian Rasic

The Maiden line-up that recorded 'The X Factor' and 'Virtual XI'. L-R: Nicko McBrain, Steve Harris, Blaze Bayley, Dave Murray, Janick Gers

**'FUTUREAL' (from 'Virtual XI', 1998)**

"'Futureal' is also from my era of Iron Maiden. It's one of my favourites, it's definitely a fan favourite and I've included it in almost every headline set of my solo career. This represents the snappier, fast-paced, catchy chorus, guitar hooks side of Maiden and was voted one of the most popular Iron Maiden songs on a fan poll that was conducted during the making of the 'Ed Hunter' album. Coming in at just three minutes long, this song is short and to the point, but it has a huge impact."

## THREE TRACKS TO AVOID

**'HOOKS IN YOU' (from 'No Prayer For The Dying', 1990)**

"As I mentioned earlier, I think there were some songs on 'No Prayer For The Dying' that didn't really capture the Maiden magic. And 'Hooks In You' is definitely one of them. It just seems like there's something missing here, because the song doesn't manage to get my blood racing like so many Maiden numbers do."

**'THE ASSASSIN' (from 'No Prayer For The Dying', 1990)**

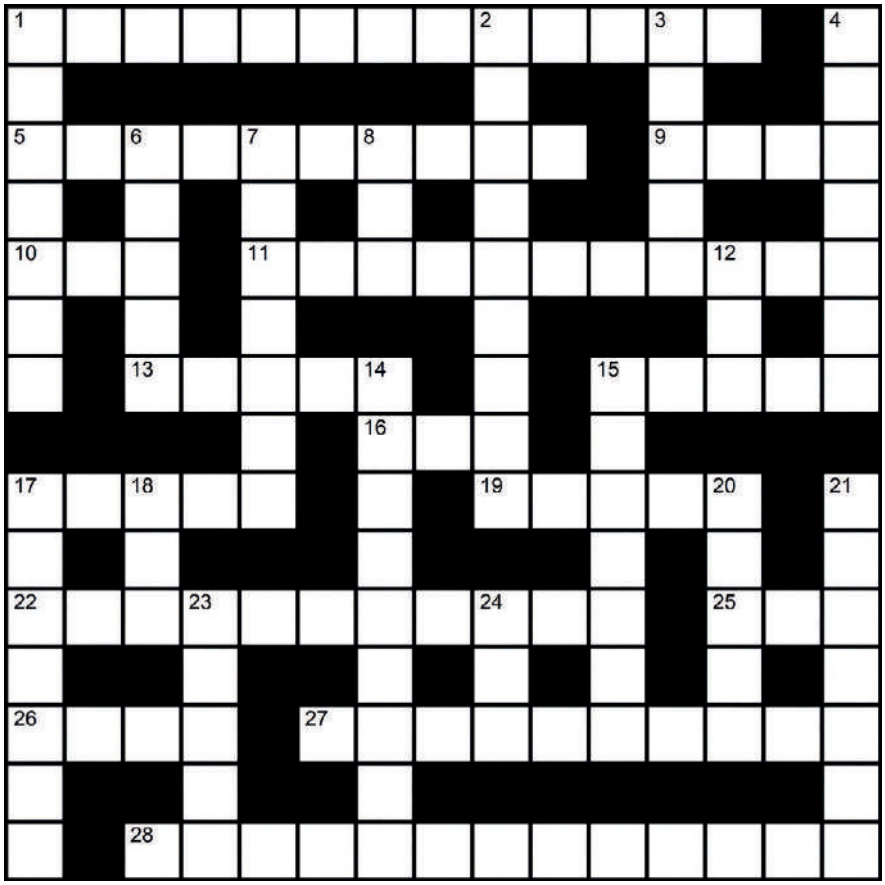
"This sounds a bit like filler to me. If you compare a number like 'The Assassin' with some of the band's classics it falls short both in terms of great storytelling and complex song arrangement. I don't believe a song like this does justice to what a great band like Iron Maiden is capable of."

**'WEEKEND WARRIOR' (from 'Fear Of The Dark', 1992)**

"This song has a bit of a rock'n'roll feel to it, which is unusual for Maiden. To me, Iron Maiden has always been about heavy metal, so this isn't something I particularly relate to. Lyrics like '*It's all bravado when you're out with your mates*' aren't something I associate with Iron Maiden either. So all in all, not a track for me."

# CROSSWORD

## The ultimate test of your deep, deep rock'n'roll knowledge. It's the *Rock Candy Mag* crossword...



The *Rock Candy* crossword is compiled by former *Kerrang!* writer **Jason Arnopp**, whose book *From The Front Lines Of Rock* gathers the highlights from his career in journalism. Featuring vintage interviews with the likes of Iron Maiden, Metallica, Kiss, Guns N' Roses, Bon Jovi and Queensrÿche, it's out on Kindle via Amazon sites worldwide or can be bought direct from Arnopp in several formats, via **payhip.com/Arnopp.**

**17 ACROSS: IT BITES**

**ACROSS**

**1** Glam rockers The Sweet initiated 'The -------- -----' in 1973. (8,5)
**5** Numerate Seattle metallers featuring guitarist Ed Archer. (5,5)
**9** Judas Priest headed here for their 'Unleashed...' live album. (4)
**10** Now-departed singer --- Gillen, who worked with Black Sabbath, Badlands and Phenomena. (3)
**11** The Quireboys had some good advice. 'Don't ---- --- ---- That Feeds You'. (4,3,4)
**13** Famous '80s German label created by Mr Karl Walterbach. (5)
**15** The month when Canadian rockers traditionally enjoy a nice glass of Chardonnay. (5)
**16** First word in the title of the first single taken from Iron Maiden's 'The Number Of The Beast' album. (3)
**17** It Bites planted a 'Kiss Like -----' back in 1988. (5)
**19** Surname of the singer who wanted to know what love is. (5)
**22** Skid Row's punk-influenced bassist. (6,5)
**25** The opening track on Bad Company's 1974 debut album. 'Can't --- Enough'. (3)
**26** Kiss's much-missed drummer, Eric ----. (4)
**27** Canadian band whose eponymous 1982 album kicked off with 'Devil's Deck'. (5,5)
**28** '---- --, ----- -- (Do Anything You Want)' said a very generous Fastway in 1983. (4,2,5,2)

**DOWN**

**1** Scorpions' fifth studio album, 'Taken -- -----'. (2,5)
**2** "Faster ---------, she's like a shark" crooned King Diamond in Mercyful Fate's 'Nuns Have No Fun'. (9)
**3** 'Sink Your ----- Into That', suggested Talas back in 1982. (5)
**4** The third studio album from '70s US progsters Starcastle. (7)
**6** AC/DC investigated a '--- -- The Wall' in 1985. (3,2)
**7** Spinal Tap leader David St -------. (7)
**8** 'Ready Or ---', said Europe on their 1988 'Out Of This World' album. (3)
**12** Opening track from Anthrax's 1985 album 'Spreading The Disease'. (1,1,1)
**14** Blue Öyster Cult singer and guitarist, rarely seen without his mirrored shades. (4,5)
**15** Canadian solo artist whose biggest hit was 'Black Velvet'. ------- Myles. (7)
**17** Helloween's 1985 debut album smashed the 'Walls Of -------'. (7)
**18** --- Holliday explored 'Modern Medicine' on their third album. (3)
**20** '----- *as well jump*', suggested Van Halen in 1983. (5)
**21** First name of the guitarist who helped open the 'Gates Of Babylon'. (7)
**23** The Cult's favourite animal is an 'American -----'. (5)
**24** UFO found themselves 'Blinded By A ---' on their 1983 'Making Contact' album. (3)

***For answers go to our website www.rockcandymag.com***

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ANGEL - 'SINFUL'

ANGEL - 'LIVE WITHOUT A NET'

FASTWAY - 'ALL FIRED UP'

WIGGY BITS - 'S/T'

IF ONLY - 'NO BED OF ROSES'

SHY - 'BRAVE THE STORM'

SHY - 'EXCESS ALL AREAS'

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'THE FINAL COUNTDOWN'

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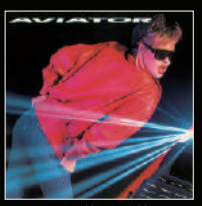
OZZ - 'NO PRISONERS'



AVIATOR - 'S/T'

GODDO - 'S/T'

GODDO - 'WHO CARES'

GODDO - 'AN ACT OF GODDO'

BATON ROUGE
'SHAKE YOUR SOUL'

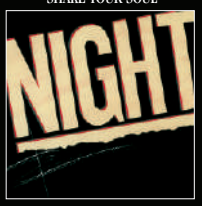
STEVE JONES - 'MERCY'

STEVE JONES
'FIRE AND GASOLINE'

THE SCREAM - 'LET IT SCREAM'

RIOT - 'RESTLESS BREED'

ORPHAN - 'LONELY AT NIGHT'



NIGHT - 'S/T'

NIGHT - 'LONG DISTANCE'

SAMMY HAGAR - 'DANGER ZONE'

Y&T - 'EARTHSHAKER'

Y&T - 'BLACK TIGER'

Y&T - 'MEAN STREAK'

LEGS DIAMOND - 'S/T'

LEGS DIAMOND
'A DIAMOND IS A HARD ROCK'

LEGS DIAMOND - 'FIRE POWER'

## COMING SOON

SLAUGHTER - 'STICK IT TO YA'

ORPHAN - 'SALUTE'

MOLLY HATCHETT - 'S/T'

ZON - 'ASTRAL PROJECTION'

GIANT - 'LAST OF THE RUNAWAYS

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